Stella Stillson Slaughter

THE MENTALLY RETARDED CHILD

For all who work with retarded children, and especially for parents, this book offers wise, realistic help in understanding the child and guiding him to his potential maturity

AND HIS PARENT

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THE MENTALLY RETARDED CHILD AND HIS PARENT

Stella Stillson Slaughter

"The informed parent who, without sacrifice of love and affection, can look at his child with some degree of objectivity, stands in a better position than does anyone else to coordinate the facts revealed about his child by medic, psychologist, and educator, and to apply them to the best advantage of the child." In this book, Mrs. Slaughter offers to parents of the mentally retarded the wise counsel which will help them to become "informed parents" in the sense she describes.

Acceptance of his child's retardation is the first and often the most difficult task the parent faces. Mrs. Slaughter offers wise advice in this area, replacing myths and misconceptions with facts and figures. She reviews signs, symptoms, causes and treatments, psychological tests—their shortcomings as well as their value—and the pros and cons of possible outside placement of the child. She discusses the men-

(continued on back flap)

THE MENTALLY RETARDED CHILD
AND
HIS PARENT

THE MENTALLY RETARDED CHILD AND HIS PARENT

by

STELLA STILLSON SLAUGHTER

Former Director
Division of Education of Exceptional Children
Milwaukee State Teachers College
(The University of Wisconsin—Milwaukee)

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Accs. No 1531

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Printed in the United States of America

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49 East 33rd Street, New York 16, N. Y.*

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Library of Congress catalog card number: 60-10462

This Book
Is Dedicated to
All Parents of Mentally Retarded Children
Who Are Striving to Better Understand Them
And to More Intelligently Meet Their Parental
Responsibilities Toward Them.

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PREFACE

For many years the chief literature regarding mental retardation was written for and by the medical man, the psychologist, and to some extent, the educator. Not much of what was written influenced in any manner parents' relationships to their mentally retarded children. There was little indeed that helped parents better understand their mentally handicapped sons and daughters as human beings. Adjustments needed to promote growth and development were not pointed out for the parent. From the time of Itard on, theories were advanced and truths revealed by physicians, psychologists, and educators; but these were seldom translated for parental usage.

It is only comparatively recently that parents of the mentally retarded have asserted themselves as parents. Their open avowals have brought more than demands for better opportunities for their handicapped offspring; they have awakened within those who have had contacts and experience with mentally retarded children a sense of responsibility toward the parents of these children. Specialists are coming to realize that whatever they have learned about mentally retarded children will make most difference to these children if understood by their parents. Books and articles directed to parents of the mentally retarded are appearing in increasing numbers. As I read some of these, I felt compelled to share some of the ideas and convictions arrived at during my years as a teacher, a special class supervisor with the

Wisconsin State Department of Public Instruction, and a trainer of teachers of the mentally retarded at Milwaukee State Teachers College, now University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee. As I look back over the years, I regret that a larger proportion of them was not spent with parents. The parents of mentally retarded children will remain as their protectors and mentors for many more years than will the parents of more gifted children. The informed parent who, without sacrifice of love and affection, can look at his child with some degree of objectivity, stands in a better position than does anyone else to coordinate the facts revealed about his child by medic, psychologist, and educator, and to apply them to the best advantage of the child.

Some of the misbeliefs and misinterpretations that yesterday confronted the person interested in the welfare of the mentally retarded have been emended. I recall being erroneously taught that 90 per cent of the cases of mental retardation were directly due to some fault in inheritance. As I began my work with children, and visited their homes, I remembered something my father often said to me as I was growing up, "Never neglect to take a second look at things and people. You'll be sure to discover something you didn't see the first time, and probably better understand." As I took second looks at many of the parents of my pupils, I found that they were intelligent and concerned parents. I found myself, in many cases, unwilling to accept inheritance as the chief causative factor of this retardation. As I took second looks at the children themselves, I discovered many worthwhile characteristics that had not been described in the textbooks I had studied. As students of the problem began to take second looks, certain theories previously accepted as fact and truth became modified and less absolute. As research continued, more and more causative factors of mental retardation were discovered. It was found that there were many cases of mental retardation that could not be laid solely, or directly, at the door of heredity.

The concept of the IQ passed through stages of acceptance. At least by the layman it was first regarded with great skepticism, but later it became a term too loosely and freely applied. Let us hope that we are nearing the point where the IQ will be discreetly used, along with other equally important evaluations, as an instrument of understanding that will help the parent look at his child as the integral human whole he really is. There are many possibilities of growth within every individual, many of which never mature because they are never nurtured. The child of normal intelligence will often find within his wider environmental existence influences which call forth possibilities unnoticed within the home. Latent possibilities within a mentally retarded child often go undiscovered and uncultured, and yet these hidden talents may be the ones which, if developed, will have more favorable influence upon his living than some more patent, and therefore, more consistently and persistently fostered abilities.

In this book, I have tried to help the parent look at his child in a realistic and understanding manner. I have tried to be concerned both with parental attitudes toward the child, and the development of habits and attitudes within the child. I have tried to indicate that a wide range of differences exists even within that narrow segment of humans known as the mentally retarded. I have tried to help the parent realize that he is training not just for today but for tomorrow as well. In dealing with general problems that arise in connection with mental retardation, my remarks, for the most part, have been prompted by the questions of untold numbers of parents contacted over a period of years.

Although I have directed my remarks to parents, it is believed that many teachers of retarded children, particularly those teaching without benefit of specialized training, will find some measure of guidance as to methods to be employed, and knowledges to be imparted. If only one parent finds his courage bolstered, his efforts more wisely directed by the words of this book, I shall be more than repaid for the writing of it.

S.S.S.

THE MENTALLY RETARDED CHILD
AND
HIS PARENT

- 1 -

MENTAL RETARDATION AND PARENTAL ATTITUDES

Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom; and with all thy wisdom get understanding. PROVERBS 4:7

To adequately fulfill the role of parenthood requires courage. The full assumption of the role requires that the parent sincerely try to look at his child as he really is, not solely as he would like him to be. One of the most difficult truths for a parent to face is the fact that his child is mentally retarded. In some cases, telltale earmarks may be present at birth, while in other cases, evidences of retardation are vague and almost indiscernible until revealed through the slowness of a child's reactions. Whether the parent learns it early or late, the fact that his child will never mentally grow beyond the bounds of childhood is not easy to accept.

When a parent, who while waiting for his baby's arrival into this world has filled his thoughts with bright dreams for his child's future, is informed that his child is mentally retarded, the suddenness and unexpectedness of the news may leave him in a state of bewildered disbelief. His parental dreams are abruptly and rudely shattered. It would be less than the normal parent who immediately philosophically and unemotionally accepted the fact. Once the initial shock has worn off, and he has had time to reflect, he will usually do one of three things. He may deny that his child is mentally retarded. He may accept the idea and assume there is nothing he can do about it. Or, he may fulfill his parental responsibilities by seeing that his child is given opportunities to develop those native potentialities he does possess. Probably no child is born without some possibilities of growth.

Often a parent's delay in acknowledging his child's apparent retardation is based on frustrated hopes and ambitions. It is usual for a parent to want his child to attain greater things in life than he himself has attained. He may hope that in one way or another, perhaps economically, perhaps socially, perhaps educationally, perhaps morally and spiritually, his child will accomplish more than he himself has accomplished. It is normal for a parent to want his child to grow to a stature that exceeds his own. He wants his child to have, and will strive to help him attain, those things which in his judgment will bring his offspring a measure more bountiful than his own of happiness or success, or of those things which the parent believes are "best" for him.

A parent who loves his child, in the truest sense of the word, will think of him as an individual who has the right to grow to be as fully mature as his potentialities permit. He will not unwisely deter maturing processes in order to satisfy his own emotional desires. He will watch the maturing of his sons or daughters with pride. He will derive deserved satisfaction from the knowledge that wise parental guidance has contributed to their growth. He will derive further satisfaction from the knowledge that his children may reasonably be expected to grow to mental and emotional maturity. A parent who has shown great wisdom in surrounding his mentally normal sons and daughters with the kinds of environmental influences that are maturing in their effects, will often show less sagacity when it comes to understanding the needs of his child of lesser mental ability—the child who is so noticeably different from his brothers and sisters, who fails to respond to many things to which his siblings respond.

Not only does he respond to fewer things, but his reactions are noticeably slower. He is slow in learning to walk and talk. He may even remain wholly infantile for a long period of time.

All too frequently a parent will cling to the idea that his child's backwardness is a temporary thing. Just give him time. He keeps looking for a spurt in his child's growth that will indicate that he is improving. When, after a long period of time, his child begins to babble a few words, parental joy knows no bounds. The child has begun to "pull out of it." If improvement is too long delayed, if the child makes no attempts to stand, or walk, or talk, the parent may begin his search for some specialist, medical or otherwise, who can "cure" whatever it is that physically accounts for his child's backward condition.

Fortunate indeed is the parent if his search takes him to someone qualified and able to tell him the truth about his child, and to suggest suitable measures for his care and training, rather than into the hands of some pseudo-authority who fills the parent with false hope, and monetarily bleeds him for treatments which accomplish for the child no more than time and nature would accomplish alone.

In a family where there are other children, a parent is apt to maintain for the child of lesser ability the same standards required of his brothers or sisters of greater giftedness. Or, if the child is a lone child, he may be expected to reach the norms of his parents' childhood, or of related or neighborhood children. The environment which generates maturity in the child with normal mental endowments, must be extensively modified if the child of lesser mental abilities is to attain the fullest maturity possible for him.

The parent who ignores his child's deficiencies, or who denies than any deficiency exists, will probably follow one of two procedures. He may do nothing, with the result that those faculties his child possesses may become at least partially atrophied through disuse. Or he may interfere with the child's learning progress by continuously trying to teach him things which are, at least at the moment, beyond his ken. If and when he does reach a stage where they are not too difficult for him to comprehend, his failures may have conditioned him against the learning. His non-successes have dulled his interest, and his efforts have been proportionately reduced. As failures pile up, self-confidence diminishes accordingly. Recognition of his retardation is the first step toward making those adjustments that enable the mentally retarded child to grow as rapidly, and as normally, as his mental limitations will permit.

The parent who recognizes that some backwardness exists, but who lives in the eternal hope that his child will become brighter as the years go by, is not squarely facing the situation. There is little, if any, evidence to support the belief that a child's inherent mental capacity will ever be materially increased. To be sure, barring the interference of disturbing and disruptive environmental factors, any child will continue to learn more and more things, but the retarded child will not learn as many things as does a child of normal intelligence, and there will be some things that are too abstract or too complex for him to comprehend no matter how long his training or life may be.

Dr. Leta Hollingworth compares mental capacities to looms. She says that these looms are "of various degrees of capacity for weaving complex and subtle patterns. A loom of simple capacity can go on as long as it lasts, weaving new patterns, a given degree of complexity not being exceeded. The neurones can go on as long as a person lives, learning new patterns, but these patterns may not exceed the capacity of that person." The parent who realizes that on the loom given his child by nature only simple patterns may be woven, is the wise parent. Forcing the child to attempt the weaving of intricate patterns with his loom of limited capacity can only result in failure and frustration. The weaver may lay down his shuttle and his threads may become rotten through disuse. The parent should also realize that even though complicated designs may not be woven, many, many different patterns within the capacity of the loom may be fabricated.

Sometimes the reluctance of a parent to acknowledge the apparent fact that his child is mentally retarded is based on a sense of shame. He may have a false sense of pride which places too much emphasis on "what the neighbors think," or he may be harboring a sense of guilt. He may think his child's condition is a disgrace because it reveals some taint within his own or his wife's inheritance. He may think about his father's brother who was considered a bit "queer," and he is sure his child's mental state has been inherited, and he feels ashamed. Or he may look critically at his wife's kin, and along with a sense of shame comes a sense of blame. He blames his wife, and he blames himself because he did not dig deeply into her family background before he married her. At least, they should never have had any children. The family tree that does not, even though most of its fruit is unblemished, bear an occasional fruit that does not fully mature or have some mark of imperfection is rare indeed. Shall the tree that has borne so much good fruit, and is capable of bearing much more, be cut down? The fact that a person is a parent of a mentally retarded child does not put him in an isolated class by himself. Many of his friends and neighbors who have borne only children of normal intelligence are, nevertheless, potential parents of mentally retarded ones.

Fear of an hereditary taint is not the only source of feelings of shame or guilt. Sometimes a mother may give shelter to the idea that things she read or thought about during the months of her pregnancy may have left their unfavorable impression upon her child, somehow stunting his mental growth. She can find that idea time and again refuted in scientific literature. Perhaps when the mother first found herself pregnant one or both of the parents, because of economic worries, or because it was considered that the family was already large enough, or because of any of a number of possible reasons, wished that the child had not been conceived. Now that the child is here, there is no lack of love for it, no letdown in the assumption of parental responsibilities, but there may be a sense of guilt gnawing at the parent's conscience that the short-lived wish has left its stamp upon the child. A parent may even look upon his child's condition as God's punishment for a human's desire to interfere with the will of the Almighty. It may require the help of a religious counselor to dispel this unenlightened idea. The parent who searches for the cause of his child's lack of intelligence in his own shortcomings, real or fancied, is only unnecessarily punishing himself, and probably contributing to the unhappiness of those about him. Such an attitude can serve only as a deterrent in his search for the best answers to the problem at hand.

A parent who feels guilty for his child's lack of natural endowments is apt to be overly emotional in his relationship to the child. He finds it hard to look at the situation with unclouded vision. The parent who deliberately shuts his eyes to the needs of his retarded child because he selfishly resents the time and bother required for his care, is less common than the parent who allows emotional dust to get in his eyes. It may have the effect of dimming the child's defects so that the parent doesn't see him as the different child he really is. Or, if he is fully aware of his child's deficiencies, he may try to "make up" to the child for his lacks by over-indulgence.

In her natural maternal role, it is usually the mother who expends the most time and energy caring for and training her mentally retarded child. It is, therefore, much easier for the mother than for any other member of the family to become overly solicitous, and overly sacrificial, in her attendance to the child. It is easy for a mother to become a martyr to a mentally retarded child while neglecting the needs of the family as a whole. The mother whose dedication to her mentally retarded child leaves little time for her to spend with other members of her family, is placing great strain upon happy family relationships. Moreover, it is doubtful that the recipient of the excessive attention is benefited in any measurable degree. Even a mentally retarded child needs to do some of his growing up by himself. Each and every member of a family needs some share of a mother's devotional care if family unity is to be preserved. A member of a family who feels that he or she is not receiving a just amount of a mother's affection may, perhaps unconsciously, build up feelings of resentment which are easily transferred to the usurper of maternal attention. Whenever a mentally retarded child becomes a hub about which all family activities must rotate, whenever emotions, unfettered by reason, dictate the procedures employed in the care and training of a mentally retarded child, happy family relationships become endangered.

The full growth of any individual demands that he learn the meaning of self-denial. To give way to the interests of a mentally retarded individual on occasion, may profit the giver as well as the recipient of the sacrifice. Each member of a family, in terms of relationship to the child, and individual ability to understand, should make some sacrifices for the less fortunate member. However, the sacrifice should be of a reasonable degree and nature, and should not unduly interfere with the sacrificer's rights and privileges. It is the unwise parent who insists that a mentally retarded youngster be included in all the play activities of his brothers and sisters. It cannot be expected that a mentally retarded child will be received with open arms into any recreational group if his presence seriously interferes with play performances or plans. Resentments are readily built up in the minds of the young. Soon the brother or sister of the retarded one may be ostracized from his normal play group as the only way of getting rid of the child who is a hindrance to their fun.

If the child can successfully perform, the story may be a different one. Once a child has performed acceptedly well in one play situation, there is more likelihood that the group will not be overly critical of some of his less skillful moves. Moreover, the big brotherly or sisterly attitude of a sibling may wear off on other playmates; but this may not be expected if his ineptitudes are so gross that they excessively slow down the activities of others. Brothers and sisters should be taught to assume an attitude of understanding toward a mental retardate. If they understand something about the nature and extent of his mental shortcomings, they can be of great assistance in finding and creating situations into which he comfortably fits. Forcing them to try to bring him into situations where he is an obvious misfit accomplishes no good purpose. Understanding the needs of a mentally retarded child necessitates understanding the needs of his siblings in their relationship to him.

The banding together, on the basis of their mutual needs and interests, of parents of mentally retarded children is a hopeful sign that attitudes towards the problems of retardation are improving. As they come to know the commonplaceness of their common problem, they more readily discard any debilitating feelings of shame they may have harbored. As they openly talk about mental retardation, as they accept it in a matter-of-fact manner, they find that others follow their example. They find more understanding upon the part of the public, and more widespread cooperation in working out problems involved. The books and articles that have been written by parents of mentally retarded children have had a wholesome effect upon the attitudes of people in general. As parents of mentally retarded children come to appreciate that mental retardation is not something to be spoken about only in whispers, they find themselves singly and unitedly better able to cope with their problems, and they find others wanting to aid them in their efforts.

No parent will be satisfied until he has eliminated all possibilities that his child's retardation does not have some physical basis that will respond to medical treatment. A parent may have to wait for some time before it can be definitely established that his child is, or is not, mentally retarded; but he should early recognize that some difficulty exists, and he should make all reasonable effort to find out the nature of the difficulty and what, if any, therapeutic measures can be applied.

Once it has been authoritatively indicated that a child is mentally retarded, there should be parental acceptance of the fact. Heads and hearts must work together if problems relating to the child's retardation are to be worked out in a manner to preserve the best interests of all touched by the problem. Hope for the mentally retarded child rests with the hope and courage of his parents; a hope built on understanding, and a courage fortified by forthrightness.

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SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

. . . we would know therefore what these things mean.
ACTS 17:20

What is said in this chapter is not said with the intent or purpose of turning parents into diagnosticians. It is, however, hoped to alert them to signs which may or may not indicate mental retardation. Fever is a symptom that accompanies many physical ailments. Taken alone it does not possess much diagnostic value; that a child is running a temperature is no sure sign that he is a victim of this or that disease. In like manner, signs herein called to the attention of the reader may be the accompaniments of conditions other than mental retardation. Particularly is this true when the signs are viewed singly. Just as a category of signs may verify the presence of some physical disease, so it may be expected that a category of signs is a more reliable indication that some degree of mental retardation exists. Not all the signs will be present in any one case, nor is there any one sign that can be relied upon as sure and certain. This chapter calls to the attention of the parent certain physical or behavior irregularities that have often been noted in mentally retarded persons, in the hope that he will be induced to ask, "What is the meaning of this?" It is further hoped that he will seek the help of someone well qualified to place a diagnostic interpretation upon the signs and symptoms noted.

In institutions where large numbers of mentally retarded persons are housed and cared for, there will be observed a number with physical anomalies. In the minds of many people, noticeable physical stigmata and mental deficiency have erroneously become almost synonymous. It is true that the lesser the degree of an individual's intelligence, the more apt he is to possess some noticeable physical irregularity, to be born with some malformed or misshapen part of the body, or to have some atypical physical characteristic. But it is equally true that he may possess some of these same physical irregularities, yet be gifted in intelligence. One or more of many of the so-called physical stigmata mentioned may or may not be present in a person of any degree of intelligence, high or low, but the lower down the scale of intelligence one goes, the more likely it is that some physical anomaly will be found. The two sides of the face and head may not be symmetrical. The head may be unusually large, unusually small, or peculiarly shaped. There may be more or less than the usual number of digits on hands or feet. The fingers may be webbed, or grown together in a shapeless mass known as "lobster hand." There may be malformation of one or both of the ears. Noses may be malformed, either broad and misshapen, or merely the so-called "button nose." The mouth may be crooked or ill-formed. The lips may be loose and flabby. The eyes may be crossed, or fail to match in size or color, or be set at different levels in the head. The eyes may rapidly oscillate from one side to the other.

The muscular control of a mentally retarded child is frequently below normal. He may reveal his poor muscular coordination by his shambling gait. He may go up and down stairs by putting either his right or his left foot forward and up each time as he climbs—not right then left, as is considered normal. He may skip awkwardly, and throw a ball awkwardly. A small percentage of mentally retarded children never learn to use their muscles for ambulatory purposes. On the other hand, there are many retarded children, especially if they approach borderline intelligence, whose muscular coordination is apparently quite normal.

Except in cases of extremely low mentality accompanied by gross physical irregularities, or in certain classified types which may be recognized through definite characteristics—as for example, the mongolian—it is not always easy to detect mental retardation in the young infant. Children of lower intelligence may tend to differ from children of normal intelligence in some physical traits, but they do not differ as much physically as they do mentally. So it is to the behavior of his child a parent may need to look if he is to detect signs of mental retardation. The mentally retarded child is sure to lag behind, some more, some less than others, in learning the common habits of childhood. The child of normal intelligence may lag in some ways, but he often makes up for it by spurting ahead in others. Spurts ahead of average performance will usually not be observed in the mentally retarded child.

Perhaps the best way to help a parent to judge the performances of his child is to indicate some of the accomplishments and the average age levels of their attainments. A number of noticeable deviations should arouse parental suspicions. A baby of normal intelligence is usually capable of following a moving light with his eyes before he is three months old. By the time he is six months old he will be able to sit up unsupported for a few seconds and to hold his head erect. He will turn his head toward the source of sound. Probably by six months, and at least by nine months, he will be able to reach for and pick up objects within his range of vision and reach. He will use his thumb to aid him in picking up an object, and will be able to retain the grasp of it for some time.

By the time he is a year old he will be using one hand, either his right or his left, predominately. Many other things may be expected of him by the age of a year. Among objects within his reach he will show preference for some over others. Although not in a constructive manner, he will begin to play with familiar objects. If one of his playthings has been dropped or playfully hidden, he will probably make some effort to recover it. Although some children do not creep before they walk, the average child will be creeping by this age. He will be able to stand for a limited number of seconds without the aid of a supporting hand. With aid, he can take a few steps. He has begun to show signs of learning through imitation. He will shake his rattle, pat-a-cake, wave "bye-bye." Show him how to make marks on a paper with a crayon and he will try to do some scribbling on his own. He can hold the cup out of which he is drinking. He has begun to show signs of cooperation while being dressed. He has learned the meaning of "no, no." He will be able to distinguish between people he sees every day. He has begun to try to talk, saying "da-da" and "ma-ma" or other equally simple words.

By the time a child is a year and a half old, he should be able to do a number of things independently. He should be able to walk alone. He should be able to climb stairs. He should be able to eat fairly well by himself, using a spoon. He should be able to tell his mother which he is in need of a bowel movement. In his play he has begun to build with blocks, to build a tower two or three blocks high. He has begun to respond to music with some display of rhythmic motion. He can scribble with a pencil. He is beginning to say more words.

By two years of age, he has gained control of his bladder. When his mother draws a straight line, he will try to draw a line that approximates straightness. He will even make an attempt at drawing a circle. He will have begun to name familiar objects. Shown a picture and asked, "What's that?", he will be able to give the names of known objects. His vocabulary should be in the neighborhood of one hundred words. He will have begun to use short sentences. When asked "What is your name?", he will respond by correctly giving his first name. He will obey such simple commands as, "Put the book on the table."

From two years on, the child should make rapid progress in vocabulary building and language usage. By the time he is three, he is usually not only using sentences, but is beginning to get an idea of the meaning of tense. He may say "runned" instead of "ran," but he has grasped the idea that not all verbs are in the present tense. By the time a child is four, with occasional prompting, he can usually retell parts of stories told or read to him.

By the time a child has reached school age, he certainly should have left baby talk and infantile pronunciations behind him. He should have progressed to a point in language development where he is using some complex sentences in his conversations. If's, when's, but's and because's are comprehended and used. He should have learned how to play with and get along with other children. The retarded child is often the one who finds himself left out of the games and activities of the neighborhood children. He can't throw the ball well enough to be included in the games of catch. He doesn't understand the simple directions required to play some game. He gets in the way of other children in games requiring speed. He is sometimes called "funny," and ostracized by other children if the slowness of his reactions tends to slow down theirs.

The child with a degree of intelligence that will eventually put him into a mental age bracket enabling him to cope, to some degree, with the academic fundamentals known as the three R's, is the one whose mental retardation is apt to go unacknowledged until after his entrance into school. His retardation may have gone parentally unobserved, or his parents may have been adept at finding alibis that accounted for his slowness in learning. If a mentally retarded child enters school as soon as he has reached the average chronological age of eligibility, he will be certain to encounter difficulty in learning to read. Unless academic bars are considerably lowered, he will be sure to be a grade repeater. His school performances are sure to indicate in one way or another his retardation.

Certainly an unexplained physical sign of uniqueness or grossness will elicit a parent's inquiry. Physical signs are less apt to escape the notice of a parent than are those related to his child's mental growth. Signs which point to a child's slowness in learning are more likely to go unchecked. If developmental progress is deterred, it should, if the clearness of the signs permit, be ascertained whether the retardation noted is a result of physical, and perhaps reparable, defect or defects, whether it may have some emotional basis, or whether it is caused by inherent and unalterable factors. Until facts are known it is impossible to adequately treat retardation. A parent sits in the most advantageous position to detect signs of deviations from the normal, but he is not ordinarily well equipped to evaluate their significance and judge their meanings. He should seek the advice of the child's pediatrician, take the child to a mental hygiene clinic, consult the advice of a clinical psychologist, or seek help from the best source available to him. Once it has been authoritatively determined that a child is mentally retarded, the parent may then open for him the gateway to the road of training and education, the only route that assures his progressive development.

- 3 -

CAUSES AND TREATMENT OF MENTAL RETARDATION

Science moves but slowly, slowly,
Creeping on from point to point.

TENNYSON

When an intelligent parent is confronted with the problem of mental deficiency in an offspring he invariably and naturally asks the question, Why? What is the reason for my child's retardation? An all too frequentally parentally accepted answer, one that is in reality no answer at all and should be given no credence, is that the condition is a "mark" supernaturally or otherwise placed upon the child. Confronted with a question for which he finds no ready answer, the parent turns to the realm of mystery. The mother of a boy who had the habit of sticking his tongue in and out of his mouth, taking this tic as her cue, decided that the boy had been "marked" when she had been frightened by a snake. The mother of a hydrocephalic child maintained that he had been "marked" when, the night before her son's birth, she had helped a group of children make Halloween pumpkin heads. A mother of a mentally retarded girl was sure that she had somehow mysteriously injured the brain of her daughter when during her pregnancy she had pressed her hands firmly against her ears to shut out the sounds during a thunder storm. Scientists tell us that an unborn child cannnot be shocked into mental deficiency, except possibly in the sense that an extreme mental or physical shock may impair an expectant mother's health to the extent that an embryo is not properly nourished, and does not properly develop. A child is not prenatally influenced by every disturbing or unusual occurrence that his mother experiences during the time she is carrying him in her womb. Nor can the mental ability of a child be in any manner influenced by what a mother reads or thinks during the months of her pregnancy. The idea of maternal impression has no basis in truth.

It can more reliably be stated what is not, than what is, the cause of mental retardation. We cannot rightly talk about a cause because no single one provides an explanation in all cases of mental retardation. In fact it has been reliably stated that there are more than seventy known causes of mental retardation. Sometimes heredity, sometimes environment must bear the major responsibility. In about one-half of the cases of mental deficiency, heredity is the primary cause. It is also estimated that about a third of the cases stem primarily from environmental causes. Continued research may alter these estimates in one direction or the other.

Years of study have gone into trying to find out just what are the rules of nature that govern the dispersal of intelligence in humans. Some studies have been scholarly attempts that have revealed many facts and truths. Others have been less scholarly and less dependable. Sometimes, too widespread conclusions have been drawn from too few cases studied. Often inadequate controls have been applied, with the result that effects have been interpreted as causes and vice versa. A gene is not a discernible substance which may be isolated and looked at through a microscope. No one scientist can, as though he were dealing with fruit flies or guinea pigs, examine several human generations and observe their traits and reactions. When the student of heredity begins an investigation of the ancestry of some individual he is dependent upon such written records, often family ones, as may be available, and upon the hearsay data he may be able to collect from relatives and others. He is often compelled to accept without benefit of scientific checks whatever his best judgment tells him is probably true, and refute whatever appears unlikely. As hearsay information is handed down from generation to generation it is bound to lose some of its accuracy. Memories are not infallible, facts are tampered with to make better story telling, and alterations are made in the interest of family pride. It is only within the last few years that physicians, schools, and clinics have generally begun to record facts about, and keep personal histories of, their clients. As the amassing of factual evidence negates the necessity for depending upon hearsay evidence, students of heredity will have less need to grope in the dark for their materials of study, and the accuracy of their findings will improve.

There are families whose members characteristically perform unintelligently. After intelligence tests have been applied to a number of the family members it may justifiedly be concluded that mental deficiency "runs" in that family. However, in cases where it is the contrast with the other undeniably intelligent members of his family that spotlights an individual's retardation, it is more difficult to decide what part, if any, inheritance plays in his condition. Almost any intelligent person can, if he will, tell of some person in his ancestral background that did not wholly come up to the family norm in some intellectual or neuropathic respect. The aunt who spent her last days in a mental institution, the uncle who left school at the fourth grade, the mother's cousin who always stayed home and helped his parents because he wasn't quite capable of facing the world alone.

Sometimes a survey of the ancestral background of a mentally retarded individual reveals two or three persons who because of one quirk or another are described as neuropaths. In the minds of some, that is sufficient evidence to pinpoint the cause of the individual's deficiency as a neuropathic constitution. The serious student finds himself dissatisfied with that diagnostic description. He feels that it leaves too much untold. Given a group of mentally retarded persons of similar type, all of whose deficiencies are said to be caused by neuropathic constitutions, no two of them may bear ancestors with the same sets of neuropathic deviations. Dr. Lionel Penrose illustrates this point when he says, ". . . no one can say . . . that a woman with an epileptic sister and mother, who marries a man whose aunts are insane, is more likely to have a microcephalic imbecile child than any other mother taken at random." He also points out that in the studies of pedigrees "we must assume that numerous genetic factors are involved and also probably environmental agencies." Truly scientific studies of the causes of similar types of mental retardation require prolonged, detailed, and statistically controlled research.

Sometimes there is evidence that brain tissues have been traumatically assailed in one or more of many possible ways. There are cases where a child's mentality has apparently developed at a normal rate of growth, and then something has happened to interfere with it. His mental development has been arrested. A severe head injury, caused by a fall or otherwise inflicted, may cause mental retardation. However, as every mother knows, children can withstand quite severe bumps on the head without injury to intellect. Sometimes when a parent begins to hunt for reasons for his child's slow learning ability he readily recalls an early childhood accident. Many times, the retardation, although not parentally noted, was already existent before the accident. Birth injuries, although many doctors claim not frequently, may cause mental retardation. Any gross injury or impairment to the brain, either before, during, or after birth, may cause mental retardation.

The toxic action of diseased and generative organisms may set up inflammatory conditions which affect brain tissues. Convulsions are sometimes indicated as a cause of retardation. Prematurity of birth may be a causative factor. Incompatibility of the

Rh blood factor in mother and child may account for retardation in the child. The field of endrocrinology has been searchlighted for connections with mental retardation, and disorders of certain ductless glands found to be closely related to mental retardation in some instances. Faulty metabolism within the brain may cause retardation. We are told that if the brain lacks oxygen for even a few minutes, permanent damage may result.

No good purpose will be served in trying to set forth a long list of known and suspected causes of mental retardation. Such a list can serve only as an invitation to the parent to try to find those symptoms which apply to his particular child, and perhaps draw faulty conclusions. The identification of causes should be left to the judgment of the family doctor, the child's pediatrician, or, if deemed advisable, a qualified specialist. The parent's main concern with the identification of the probable cause or causes of mental retardation in his child, should be to find out whether the cause is one that indicates that some type of special treatment may be beneficial. Also, to find out if there are conditions which indicate a strong likelihood that other children born into the family may be retarded, and to determine whether these conditions can be altered to reduce that possibility.

Studies are being made to find out the effects of amino acids on the growth and behavior of mental retardates. There has been considerable experimentation with the use of gultamic acid, and the preponderance of opinion seems to indicate that the acid has the effect of stimulating and increasing the attention span during the time it is being administered, but that the effects slough off when the acid is no longer given to the patient. In hospitals, clinics, and institutions, stimulative and depressive drug therapy is quite prevalently applied to many organically and/or emotionally disturbed mental retardates.

To date, the main avenue of treatment for most mentally retarded individuals is training and education. Long years have been spent studying the causes and searching for treatments for mental retardation. More and longer scientifically devoted hours will be required before causes will lie generally revealed and understood. It will probably be a long time before definitive answers can be given to most of the parents who ask, Why? New discoveries will be made, accepted theories will be reappraised, and collected data will fall into their proper relationships. Perhaps in the days to come it will no longer be so generally necessary to tell parents: There is no cure.

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THE PSYCHOLOGICAL EXAMINATION AND THE MENTALLY RETARDED CHILD

> *The only reliable source of information about a particular child is that obtained by studying the child himself.*
>
> RUTH STRANG

It is only when a parent knows something about the degree and nature of his child's retardation that he can intelligently plan for his care and training. Parental instinct cannot be relied upon to furnish a parent with the wisdom needed to understand and cope with the problems peculiar to his child's retardation. The mental hygiene clinic is an excellent source of help. The well staffed clinic has psychologists, doctors, and social workers, all working as a team to better understand, and to help the parent better understand, the retardate and his problems. There are also many trained clinical psychologists practicing privately.

One of the important features of a psychological examination is the application of a mental test to ascertain a child's level of general intelligence. While the IQ obtained furnishes no overall picture of a child's retardation, it is a necessary part of the examination. A child's behavior cannot be well understood except in relation to his ability to understand, an ability in large measure dependent upon his inherit intelligence.

Recently the author overheard the college-bred mother of a retarded boy who had been excluded from school after examination by a school psychologist remark, "Someone must sit up nights thinking up questions for those idiotic tests." The mother might have had more respect for the procedures employed if she had known the amount of scientific research that had been employed in the making of the tests—and, parenthetically, it might be added in this particular case, if the test results had been incorporated into a more thorough study of the case.

A distinction should be made in the mind of a parent between group and individual psychological tests. Group tests, which may be applied to more than one person at a time, are used in schools, colleges, industry, and elsewhere when time expended in the giving is an element to be considered. They have great value for purposes of screening, and for classifying within groups, but they are not sufficiently refined, nor can the giving of them be well enough controlled, to be used to determine whether or not a person is mentally retarded. The discussion here is concerned with the individual intelligence examination.

A parent may naturally assume that because of his constant association with his child he is better able to judge that child's intelligence than is some strange psychologist who sees his child for only a comparatively short time. There are many things that tend to invalidate a parent's judgment of his child's intelligence. A parent tends to overrate it, particularly if the child is mentally below par. He may be deceived by a sunny, cheerful facial expression. A happy faced child is often thought of as a bright child. Agility and quickness of movement may be regarded as signs of good intelligence. A parent may assume his child is mentally well equipped because he can recite a number of things from memory. Actually, many retarded children have good rote memories. Binet, the famous French psychologist and pioneer in the field of mental testing, called memory "a great simulator of intelligence." A person may be able to recite the Gettysburg Address from beginning to end, yet not have the slightest appreciation of its simply and beautifully worded significance. A person may have a good rote memory, yet be unable to adjust himself to some of the simplest requirements of everyday living.

The parent is apt to overlook many essential facts in the evaluation of his child's intelligence.

In attempting to evaluate his child's intelligence, the parent may even ask some of the same questions that a psychologist might ask. He may ask a child his age. He may ask him to count. He may ask him his name. He is apt to forget to ask the important question: At what age did my child first learn these things? He probably does not know the average ages at which children learn certain things; he has no norms with which to compare his child's performances. Even if he recognizes that some differences exist, he is probably unable to judge their degree. The lack or use of a norm is one of the important differences between casual and scientific judgments of intelligence. The psychologist compares a given child's response to a certain question or assigned task with the average age response as it has been scientifically calculated. The parent's questions are limited in scope, touching relatively few spots in the child's mental makeup. Psychological tests call for responses in many areas; a large number of tests related to many types of ability are used. One child may be as bright as another, but the abilities will not be the same in all areas tested. One child may exceed another in some certain fields, and not do as well in others, yet the two may be regarded as equally bright children. Questions used in psychological tests are not chosen purely by guesswork, but are selected because study and research have proved their suitability.

A general intelligence test measures a number of different abilities. These abilities seem to somehow stick together in individuals in a manner that justifies thinking of the combination as a general inherent force in learning. When the results of the tests of these different abilities are united and smoothed out into a single term, we have the intelligence quotient. It is an indication of some of the limitations, and some of the potentialities, in a general intellectual respect. It bears relationship to a child's school success. It predicts, within fairly wide limitations, how maturely he can think. Other things being equal, some predictions may be made regarding his eventual socio-economic attainments. There is agreement that general intelligence is related to the ability of a person to cope with problems encountered. Some individuals may readily find answers to exceedingly difficult and complicated problems, while others have difficulty with comparatively simple ones. Some individuals are inherently capable of molding their futures; others cannot see beyond the present and the immediate. Some persons are capable of philosophical thinking; others can employ only platitudes. Some are capable of thinking things through, and adapting their actions according to the exigencies of the situation; others are chiefly dependent upon habit. Some can create; others can only copy.

To be sure, the abilities described are not as absolute as may seem to be implied, some have relatively more of them, some relatively less. The point is that an individual intelligence examination may reveal, within reasonably wide limitations, an individual's potential abilities in the areas suggested. The term potential is advisedly used because emotional or environment factors may deter the development of inherent abilities. This can be certain: no person can perform beyond the limits of his inherent abilities. The psychological test is a valuable asset in the recognition both of inherent limitations and of inherent potentialities.

Well constructed intelligence tests employ materials that are familiar to children in general, not just to some small selected or segregated group. Materials are not selected just because it is thought it would be well for a child to know these certain things, but rather because they can normally be expected to have been, or to be, present in his environment. Among things a child might be expected to know at certain ages are his name and his age.

Children generally are expected to have some familiarity with numbers, and to have acquired some use of language.

Whatever the commonly experienced material used, its testing value is dependent upon the age level at which it is basically placed. A fourteen-year-old child should be able to tell the difference between a president and a king, but it is certainly not to be expected that the average seven-year-old will know it. How much of what a child remembers about things he has heard or read, how well he discriminates, how well he is able to detect absurdities, how well he does a number of things, depends to great extent upon his mental age. A testmaker cannot guess at the average age level at which a certain test may be performed. He arrives at that decision only after long and painstaking trials. Nor is he satisfied with trying out his tests on a small and selected group of children. He tries them out on thousands of everyday children. When a test is placed at a certain age level it is put there because it has been found that a large percentage of the children tested were able to successfully pass the test at that age. It has also been found that there is an increase in successes at the next higher age, and a decrease at the next lower one. A test that does not meet these requirements is not considered a good test. The tests are widely varied in content, and include many types of thought processes. They are wide, not narrow, in scope, allowing the psychologist to let the plumb line down into many kinds of mental pools.

Perhaps the simplest way to explain the procedures of individual intelligence testing is to take a hypothetical case. At the suggestion of school authorities, Patty has been brought to a clinic by her mother. A group intelligence test given to Patty's class left her at the bottom of the list. This rating, together with the fact that Patty has been consistently getting failing grades, induced the school principal to suggest to Patty's mother the advisability of a psychological check-up. Naturally the mother is disturbed—much more so than Patty, who is glad for a day's release from the classroom. There is some conversation between the mother and the psychologist, chiefly confined to routine information such as the child's birth date. Care is taken not to say anything that might be disturbing to Patty. Patty is not kept waiting for a long tiresome period. Just enough is said to get the data necessary to the completion of the test, and to make Patty's mother feel as comfortable as possible. There will be time for further conversation later.

The first task of the tester after she and Patty are in a secluded room together is to establish rapport with her. A few questions about pets at home, play activities, etc. are usually sufficient. It is surprising to see how quickly the cooperation of most children may be gained. Having overcome any noticeable timidity, and having apparently gained Patty's confidence, which she will endeavor by frequent reassurances to retain throughout the test, the tester starts the examination proper. The child's birth date as supplied by the mother shows that Patty has a chronological age of nine years and six months. Since the group test has suggested probable retardation, the tester starts her questioning at the six-year-old level to avoid running into too much failure at the start. Patty correctly answers the first six-year-old question but fails on the next one, so the tester drops down to the five-year-old level. She correctly answers five of the six tests at that level; evaluating each of the tests at two months each gives her a credit of ten months at the five-year-old level. She successfully passes all tests at the four-year-old level, so that becomes her basic age.

The tester returns to the six-year-old level, where Patty correctly does four of the tests gaining a further credit of eight months; at the seven-year-old level she gains four additional months, but fails all the tests at the eight-year-old level. The highest age level at which she successfully does all the tests, known as her basic age, is four. It is assumed that she would successfully be able to do all the things required of a three year old. It is also assumed that she would have missed all the tests above the eight-year-old level had they been given her. Of course at some later time in her growth she will undoubtedly be able to do some of the more difficult tests, but her mental age may be expected to remain consistently behind her chronological age. The following summarizes the method of arriving at her mental age:

	Years	Months
Basic Age	4	
Credits earned at Year V (5 tests at 2 months each)		10
Credits earned at Year VI (4 tests at 2 months each)		8
Credits earned at Year VII (2 tests at 2 months each)		4
	4	22

Patty's mental age is thus five years and ten months. Her IQ is found by dividing her mental age of seventy months by her chronological age of 114 months and multiplying by 100; the result is 61. With the knowledge that Patty is a mentally retarded child with an IQ of 61, which means that she can be taught many worthwhile things even though her academic knowledges remain limited, her parents may more intelligently plan for her present educational needs, and her future course of life, than as if they had remained in ignorance of her mental status.

Is there hope that as the mentally retarded child grows older his IQ may improve? Unfortunately there is little or no hope that anything like normalcy will be achieved. As his chronological age increases it may be expected that his mental age will also increase, but he will not gain a full year of mental growth for every year of temporal growth. To be sure, a re-test may show a gain or loss of a few points in IQ, but there will probably be no significant change. The age at which a test is given is a factor that cannot be wholly ignored. Children tested at a young age and then tested again later will often show some improvement. Gifted children show greater variations in IQ's obtained on tests given at different times than do children of average or less than average intelligence. The IQ's of retarded children tend to remain more constant than do those of children who are not retarded. The corollary of that statement would seem to be that the IQ has better than average prognosticative value for a retardate.

Who tests a child is a matter of considerable importance. The results of an individual psychological examination may be relied upon only when given by a person trained and qualified to administer them. The procedures used by an unqualified individual may invalidate the test results, either erroneously raising or lowering an IQ. Tests must be given with exactness, and variations from that exactness are permitted only within specified limits. To keep to that exactness, yet give the assurance necessary to call forth the performer's best efforts, requires skill. There are individuals who cannot refrain from giving hints, clues, and instructions which negate test results. Beyond those specifically designated as permissable, interpolated remarks should have no direct bearing upon test questions; but that does not mean that words of encouragement, or expression of approval, for a task well completed are to be omitted. Then there are those testers with personalities which build up barriers between themselves and those they seek to test, and who thus fail to gain the cooperation necessary to obtain best performances.

The qualified person investigates the possibility of the presence of peculiarities which might tend to invalidate test results. For example, there are many things which normally come within the experience of most children which would not be included in the experiences of a blind child. The author recalls the case of a girl whom someone had tested and diagnosed as an extremely retarded child, when in truth her main deficiency was unusually poor vision. She had been operated on for congenital cataracts, and even with the aid of glasses was not able to read ordinary print. Failure in school had built up in her a deep sense of inferiority. At the age of eight she was placed in a conservation of vision class. It was several months before she was able to regain any confidence in herself. Using large print which she was able to see she finally began to read, and from that time on made rapid progress. At the author's last contact with the girl, she was doing creditable work, after twice skipping grades, as a junior high school student.

Deaf children, or those very hard of hearing, need a predominately performance type of test, rather than one that puts a high premium upon the use and understanding of language. The ability to understand and use language, except in unusual cases, is universally expected of persons of good intelligence. It would not of course be fair for a tester to expect a child who has been in the United States only a few months to answer all questions expounded to him in English. If some of the same questions were asked him in the language with which he has had longer acquaintance, he might be able to answer them. If there is any question at all that lack of knowledge of the English language may be influencing answers, the experienced tester will indicate that the IQ obtained may not be a true IQ, and suggest the necessity of a re-test as soon as the individual has become better acquainted with the English language. In other words, the IQ in such an instance should serve only as a challenge to an instructor, and not as evidence of the person's limited intelligence. A person administering a mental test should conform to rules of procedure, and is not permitted to vary tests to suit his whims or ideas of the exigencies of a case, but he should use common sense when it comes to the interpretation placed upon results obtained.

Any sensory defect which interferes with normal intake from the outer to the inner world of a person may have its effect upon the IQ. Extreme environmental barrenness that in any respect withholds from a child the experiences we normally think of as a part of every child's life might of course affect his IQ. We certainly can't expect a child to have learned something with which he has never come in contact. But the environment of an average child is filled with as many opportunities for learning as is the environment of almost every other child. The individual intelligence test is based upon the average and the normal, not upon the unique and unusual.

Occasionally emotional blocking may interfere with obtaining accurate intelligence quotients. The skillful giver of tests will know how to put the shy child at ease, and to gain the cooperation of the negativistic child; but sometimes deep seated emotional frustrations interfere with a child's responses to test questions. When test results show that a child has given a scattered performance, the psychologist becomes suspicious that the IQ obtained may not furnish a true representation of intellectual abilities. That is, his good performance at one age level may belie his poor performance at some lower level. The psychologist is inclined to believe that something more than inherent mental limitations may be affecting the child's performances. Such a child should be the object of observation and study. There are some pseudoretardates who perform sufficiently like mental retardates as to easily be mistaken for them, yet who are not inherently lacking in general intelligence.

It is only when a parent knows something about the degree of retardation of his child that he can wisely plan for his development and progress. For this reason a child suspected of retardation should be given an individual mental test at as early an age as he can respond in enough ways to make results translatable in terms of IQ. Retests should be given from time to time, and fluctuations in test results taken into account, and procedures adjusted if it is indicated that they should be. Any child who reaches a point in his development where his intelligence may be measured on a standardized intelligence test has some worthwhile trainability.

Within comparatively wide limitations there are some reasonably safe conclusions that may be made on the basis of the IQ. Children with IQ's below 50 may not be expected to achieve any appreciable degree of academic success. They will never develop to a place where they can successfully manage their own affairs. They require a lifetime of protection and supervision. A person's ability to protect himself against physical dangers diminishes as his IQ lowers. However, there are many more mentally retarded children whose IQ's exceed 50, than those that fall below. The higher the IQ, the greater the implied trainability. Most children with IQ's of 50 or 55 can eventually learn to read a little. Most with IQ's of 70 and 75 may be taught to read as well as the average third or fourth grader, a few even better. Those between 50 and 75 can manipulate numbers to some extent; the larger proportion of them can learn to write legibly. The relatively more intelligent may acquire some knowledge in the field of social science, providing curricular choices and teaching methods are adapted to their needs.

The parent should not assume that just because two children have identical IQ's their learning abilities will be exactly the same. The IQ does suggest general limitations, but it does not indicate specifically just how much a child may learn of this or that. If two children have IQ's of 60 we take it for granted that neither will be able to cope with high school algebra, but one might learn more, the other less, during his school years of addition and subtraction, multiplication and division.

The mental age gives valuable information about what may be expected from a child at the moment, but again there are wide variations. A given child with a mental age of six, performing in a manner normal for him, will probably not perform all things in the average manner of a six-year-old; some things he will do less well, some things better, yet on the whole we would consider his performances to be about on the six-year-old level. Broadly speaking, the mental age, which is constantly changing up to a certain point, is a measure of present abilities, while the IQ, which theoretically remains more or less constant, is in many respects a prognosticator of the future.

Tests of general intelligence are not designed to measure all abilities. There are some special abilities which are not highly correlated with general intelligence. Music, for example, is recognized as a special ability. A person of high general intelligence may have but a small degree of musical ability. No amount of persistent training could turn him into an accomplished musician. The mentally retarded child may exhibit more ability to draw pictures than does his brother who is headed for college. To be sure, Beethoven would never have been a name so universally spoken had there not been a goodly degree of intelligence coupled to his musical talent. On the other hand the author recalls a girl with an IQ in the 60's who never did learn what multiplication was intended for, but sang with a voice of such natural Italian beauty that she was in demand as an entertainer at community affairs. Another mentally retarded boy met the competition against many entrants at a county fair to win a blue ribbon for his landscape painting.

It is not contended that artistic genius may not in considerable degree be dependent upon good general intelligence, but there undoubtedly are inherent ingredients of artistic abilities, which people possess in widely varying degrees, and these are not measured on an intelligence test. Of course, we cannot expect an individual to become a qualified mechanical engineer unless he has a normal amount of general intelligence linked to his extra mechanical aptitudes, but in the measurement of his general intelligence there will be little or no revelation of his special ability. Many retarded individuals have some useful hand skills or mechanical skills about which the intelligence test tells little or nothing. Motor skills and muscular strength are left unrevealed. Personality traits also remain unmeasured by the general intelligence test.

The IQ is not just a tag with which to label a child, it is a diagnostic instrument to be used in his behalf. It is, however, not to be regarded as an overall index of *all* of a child's potentialities and abilities. The psychologist makes use of many diagnostic techniques in his appraisal of the child's mental assets and liabilities. The usefulness of the IQ is limited unless it is interpreted as a part of a child's general makeup. The clinical psychologist is trained to assess a retardate's intellectual functionings as influenced by his special abilities and disabilities in the main areas of mental adaptations. He notes emotional disturbances which may have an inhibiting influence on the retardate's intellectual and social development. These disturbances may often be traced to environmental influences, may be organic in origin, may perhaps denote brain damage. Frequently it is the psychologist who alerts the medical man to these conditions. The psychologist studies the inherent qualities of a retardate, his behavior, his environment, and then tries to integrate his findings in a manner that will have import for the child's development and care. Every trainable mental retardate is entitled to a psychological examination.

- 5 -

THE MENTALLY RETARDED CHILD AND HIS PLACEMENT

When anything is growing, one former is worth a thousand reformers. HORACE MANN

The best place for any mentally retarded child is where he has the best chance to grow, an environment that nurtures the formation of habits and learning that add to his fullness of living, and discourages the growth of undesirable habits and learnings. Sometimes that environment will be found within the home, sometimes without. Not only his needs but those of other growing members of his family should be considered before it is decided where is the best place for him. There is no set answer to the question. The child's degree of trainability, the environmental agents at work in his particular case, and the resources available for his care and training are all factors that must be taken into consideration before the best answer may be found.

First, consider the needs of a child with extremely limited possibilities. There is a small percentage of retarded children so handicapped mentally that they never learn to walk or talk, that can never be required to make even the simplest social adaptations. Such a child needs a place where he can receive good physical care, be taught such baby lore as he is capable of assimilating, and receive such measure of kindly affection as is necessary to satisfy his emotional needs. Admission to a state institution is one possible answer. Not every parent will find that avenue open to him, and even though he does he may not find it an acceptable answer in his specific case.

When a parent is able to pay for such services, placement in the home of someone able and willing to care for the child is sometimes the answer. In one instance the grandmother of a seriously retarded child cared for him in her home. She was a widow who lived by herself. For his care she received a modest sum which, added to her own meager income, permitted her to live independently. In another case a practical nurse cared for two seriously retarded children in her home. Both were from large families which demanded much of the mothers' time. The parents of the children were able to visit them frequently, yet the mothers were spared the exacting responsibilities of their intimate care.

Frequently the feasible answer seems to be the employment of someone to stay in the home and assist the mother in the care of a child, and perhaps with household duties. When the family budget will not permit the employment of additional help, other members of the family should sometimes relieve the mother in her attendance upon the child, and should perform some of the household duties she would normally be expected to assume.

Then there is the child who, although he will not need to live in an isolated or semi-isolated manner, will never be able to make any appreciable academic progress. He will not, except in those few places where classes are set up to accomodate the more seriously retarded, be accepted into a public school situation. Where shall he be trained? It may be in the home under the care of parent or tutor. It may, and preferably so, be with some homogeneous group where the standards set up are the standards by which his performances may be justly judged, and where he is on competitive terms with his colleagues. This group may be in a state school, a private school, or in a locally organized group.

For the child who reaches a mental age of educability, there comes the necessity for surveying the situation for schools or classes that will accept him and furnish the type of curricula adapted to his needs. The public school offers the answer for some parents. Regrettably, schools in far too many instances do not identify the mentally retarded child as such until after he has had a school trial, and has failed to adapt himself to the program set up. A mentally retarded child's chances for progress are greatly increased if his deficiencies are discovered upon, or preferrably before, school entrance. Many school systems provide excellent programs for the early recognition of individual capacities, and adjust educational procedures to accord with levels of intelligence.

Some schools conduct special classes for mentally retarded children. The classes are limited in enrollment, permitting the teacher to individualize her teaching. She is not held down to any rigid rules for grade classification of her pupils. In group activities a child may perform part of the time with one group, and part of the time with another. The teacher of the class will usually be one especially trained to understand the needs of retarded children, and the teaching techniques best suited to them. While special classes were formerly found chiefly in urban areas with relatively large school populations, there has been an expansion of them in the less thickly populated areas. However, special class facilities are still unavailable to the greater proportion of those who could profit from enrollment in them.

There are a number of good private schools for mentally retarded children in the United States. A few of established worth have gained reputations for their painstaking work with retarded children, and for the research programs carried on in their behalf. Teachers in the better private schools apply the same psychological rules in their teaching as do the better special class teachers in the public schools. There are also a number of schools for mentally retarded children sponsored by different religious denominations. In some cases the enrollment of a child is not predicated upon church affiliation. The parent interested in private schools is referred to the directory listed in the Appendix of this book.

State institutions range anywhere from those that accept entrants up to their capacity and beyond, and care for not much more than their bare physical needs, to those which offer carefully planned and practical training and educational programs. When capability permits, they train with the intent of equipping the child for return to home and community. If need be they supervise him after his re-entrance into society. Some of the inter-related deterrents that detract from the maximum efficiency of state school programs are inadequate funds, inadequate housing and overcrowding, insufficient personnel, poorly trained personnel, politics, and public indifference. Until he has investigated, no parent should jump to the conclusion that the school or schools which offer training for the mentally retarded in his state are below par.

There is another way in which some parents of trainable and educable mentally retarded children have solved the problem of schooling for them. Nearly every parent, if he seeks, will find other parents not too far distant from his home who are facing the same problem. When even a few parents band together they can usually find some spot for a classroom, some way of equipping it, some means of transportation, and some teacher for the group. Mothers may take turns acting as teacher assistant to help with the games, reading stories, lending a hand when needed. Because the teacher of the mentally retarded cannot depend upon books alone, but must utilize the pictorial and the concrete to a large extent in her teaching, hours of out-of-the-classroom preperation are required. Mothers can be of great assistance in the preparation of these materials, releasing teacher time that may profitably be used in parent-teacher consultations.

Incidentally, such a class, privately sponsored and successfully conducted, may find itself in due time absorbed in the public school system. Concentrated and organized parental effort may be expected to have more propaganda value than does the necessarily feebler effort of a single parent. It is suggested that any parent or parents interested in group organization in the interests of the mentally retarded child write the National Association for Retarded Children, whose address will be found in the Appendix, for practical suggestions and organizational assistance.

Another possibility for the growth and training of the mentally retarded youth or adult is the sheltered workshop. The individual is trained under sheltered conditions where demands are less than those of the highly competitive outside world. Policies vary from workshop to workshop. In some there seems to be greater emphasis on providing a continuously protective atmosphere, where the retardate can learn how to make and continue to make some salable article or articles. Some try to teach necessary work habits and skills to bridge the gap between non-employment and employment in some capacity. The aim is to return the individual to the work world better prepared to meet its requirements. As is true with the school, the workshop can do more for an individual in a shorter length of time if it is not necessary to spend time inculcating habits that should have been learned in the home. There are varying degrees of need for shelter, and the workshop idea is one that needs encouragement.

The relative merits of public, private, or state schools for an educable mentally retarded child will need to be pondered by his parents. The public school has one possible advantage over the private or state school, in that the child is never transplanted from the setting to which he will probably have to make his adjustments as an adult. The child who goes away to school will have to make certain adjustments in his new school situation, and later will be compelled to readjust to his home and community environment. However, no environment remains unchanged, and time demands adaptations even though a child remains at home.

For the child who will never have to come up against a harsh economic world, whose future habitat will be a sheltered one, the private school which excels in the teaching of social amenities may be the best answer. Habits formed may often be more important than the locale of their learning and performance. In certain situations, practical or psychological factors may impel the parent to the wise decision that his child should be educated away from home. It may be that the adaptations required of other family members in order to confirm his membership in the family group are unjustifiably difficult. A child who is beginning to develop behavior problems, who seems poorly adjusted to his home situation, will often show remarkable improvement when sent to a state or private school.

Sometimes the public school with a limited number of mentally retarded special class enrollees will provide excellent educational opportunities up to the age when a retardate might profit from vocational training, but is unable to provide that additional needed training. If the retardate is expected to become a future wage earner, enrollment in a state school offering vocational training, or in a sheltered workshop may need to be earnestly considered.

The parent who is going to send his child away from home may rely upon the advice of trusted advisors in the selection of a school, or he may feel that a visit to a school under advisement is the only thing that will satisfy his mind one way or another. The school that does not welcome his inspectional visit merits the suspicions of the parent that conditions may possibly exist which are not wholly favorable to the welfare of his child. Many questions will come to the mind of the parent as he tries to evaluate the school. Is the food sanitarily prepared and served, and does it meet dietary needs? Are there evidences of intolerable overcrowding? Are useful things being taught to those able to learn? Are housekeeping arts being taught? Manual arts? What are the recreational opportunities? Do most of the trainable children seem to be doing something a fair share of the time, or are there too many standers-around and lookers-on? Do both work activities and recreational activities seem to be reasonably well supervised? Does the school appear to be well staffed, and do staff members appear to be adequately trained for the tasks required of them? Did you seem to be a welcome visitor, and was there a willingness on the part of those officially responsible to discuss with you how the school might hope to fulfill the needs of your child?

It is rather difficult for a parent to judge whether or not children are properly grouped for housing or training purposes. An inexperienced observer is inclined to base his judgments of group suitability on the basis of physical appearance and size. There may be many reasons, not discernible at a glance, for placing a particular child in a particular group. Both his degree of intelligence and his present state of learning influence his group placement. There may be social reasons why he fits better with one group than another. The fact that a parent sees children working or playing together in what seems to him to be a heterogeneous group need not necessarily be cause for concern. The important thing is not how misplaced the child may appear to an observer, but how comfortable he feels within that group, and what his chances are of learning within it.

An important factor in the evaluation of any school group of mentally retarded children is the degree of contentment revealed by the children themselves. Do most of the children appear to be happy? Every parent wants his child to be happy, and the fear that he will not may induce him to deprive his mentally retarded child of his school rights and privileges. There may be some tearfulness at parting, and there will probably be a temporary feeling of insecurity after his parent's departure, but it is a mistake to take a child home at the first signs of homesickness. Give him time to adjust. The attention of teachers and supervisors, plus the new found companionship with his peers, may ordinarily be relied on to erase his feelings of lonesomeness, and build up his sense of security. There is far more chance than would be possible in the average home situation that he will find others who like to do the same things he does, and who will be able to do them about as well as he. Particularly during his play and recreational periods he is apt to find satisfying experiences. His teachers will know how to protect him against failures in the classroom. A parent should give a chosen school a fair trial before he decides that his child's placement there has been a mistake. He should realize that just as a child is slow in learning many things, he may be somewhat slow in learning to make his adjustment to his new situation—a situation including many elements that are strange to him. When the strangeness wears off, he may be expected to find satisfactions never before known to him.

It is not intended to suggest that placement in a school away from home should provide a divorcement from parents and home, but the interim between the child's initial entrance and the first parental visitation should be long enough to give him time to discover the satisfactions to be found in his new situation. Home visits and parental contacts should be frequent enough to let the child know he has a home and parents who love him, but not so often that they become disruptive hindrances to his school adjustment.

As has been indicated, the case of each mentally retarded child should be individually treated. The child's innate potentialities should be considered together with all the environmental factors involved. There are a number of questions that need to be asked and answered before arriving at a placement decision. How trainable is the child at the moment? What are his ultimate expectations? Does he have handicaps other than his mental retardation that necessitate additional modifications in his care and training? What is the financial status of the family? Does the parent want him, if possible, to be trained for some type of employment? Will he eventually be expected to partially or wholly earn his own livelihood? Does the presence of the child in the family group place too much restraint on the normal activities of its members, either individually or collectively? Is there some other member of the family group who because of invalidism or senility requires considerable care and attention? Is the child an only child, or are there brothers and sisters? Is there ample room in the house so that, without depriving other family members of their privacies, the child may have a room of his own in which to sleep and play? Is the child reasonably amenable to discipline? Does his presence cause resentment or friction within the family circle? What is the general family attitude toward this child? Do certain members believe that placement outside the home should be arranged for the child? Is there justification for their wish? And let us never forget the question: Where will the child find his best chance for development?

Perhaps the recital of a few life situations wherein parents have attempted to solve the placement problems of their mentally retarded children may prove helpful to other parents. Some parent may find in them elements comparable to his own situation.

The first case is one where each and every member of the family displayed emotional maturity above average. The child in question was so infantile that during his lifetime he never was able to speak, walk, or even feed himself. He lay in his crib or a carriage in which he was wheeled onto a porch during clement weather. The family included the mother, a very intelligent woman; the father, a professional man; the child's brother and sister, both highly intelligent children; and a maternal grandmother. Except when wheeled out of doors, the child remained in his own room where every possible provision was made for his comfort. Aside from assuming major responsibility for his physical care the mother spent a short time each day singing to him, holding his hand, trying to attract his attention with a rattle or other baby toy, or in some manner making sure the child would not be deprived of the sense of security we attribute to affectionate attention. She did not, however, spend long hours holding him in her arms or sitting by his side. If the mother was away from home, the grandmother and housekeeper saw that a day never went by without the child receiving some attention apart from that required in his physical care.

Each member of the family tried to devote a brief daily period of attention to the child. The only explanation offered to the sometimes curious playmates of the child's siblings was that their brother was an invalid confined to his bed and unable to see visitors. When the child died at the age of about eight or nine years, the family experienced a genuine feeling of loss. Had any member of the family been less understanding, or less cooperative, the situation would have been far less tolerable. Moreover, the financial status of the family permitted the employment of household help, leaving the mother ample time to participate normally in social and community life.

In another case of an equally intelligent and financially endowed family, emotional tensions dominated the situation. The maternal attitude made the problem more difficult than it need have been. The retarded family member was a mongolian girl with an IQ in the low 50's. The girl had been born when the only other child in the family, a boy, was between two and three years old. From the time of the girl's birth the mother's attention was centered upon her. The major care of the young boy was turned over to a nursemaid. A close relationship grew up between father and son. The father criticized the mother for her lack of attention to her son. The mother accused the father of not loving the girl when he wanted to employ someone to help with her care. The boy, whose intelligence quotient was far above average, and the father formed one team; the mother and daughter another.

When the girl was seven years old the mother tried to enter her in the first grade, and was indignant when admission was refused. She employed three tutors in one year, discharging them one after another when the child could not master the rudiments of reading. She was sure the failure was due to poor teaching methods. Sensing that his wife was on the verge of a nervous breakdown because of her overzealous care of the child, the father took the problem to the principal of the school attended by his son, seeking her advice to find out if there was anything that could be educationally done for his daughter. She supplied him with the names of two or three good private schools for exceptional children. Their attractive catalogs solicited the mother's interest. Frustrated by her experiences with private tutors, she at last consented to the enrollment of her daughter in a private school. The mother responded to the kindly counseling of the school's staff members, and was well pleased upon her daughter's first visit home to note the decided improvement in the child's manners and behavior. Gradually the home and the mother's social life resumed normalcy.

Another case involved a boy who had twice failed the first grade, and had been passed to the second because a rule of the school did not permit the retention of any child more than two years in any one grade. Having practically no reading knowledge, his failures in the second grade were more spectacular than those of the first. He developed a sense of inferiority, which found its defense in a quarrelsome attitude which got him into frequent difficulty. A Stanford-Binet test applied by a state psychologist revealed an intelligence quotient in the low 60's. Because of overcrowded conditions, his parents found that it would probably be some time before he could gain admission to the state school. The father worked in the local creamery, and his income did not warrant consideration of a private school. However, the parents were genuinely concerned about their son, and willing to make any adjustments they could to give him a better opportunity. Learning of the existence of special classes for retarded children in several cities in his state, the father succeeded in getting employment in one of the cities, and moved his family there. He enrolled his son in a special class. He was told that later his boy would be given the opportunity to enroll in a special vocational training class to fit him for the routine type of job he could eventually be expected to handle. Had there been less opportunity to solve the employment problem, or if, for any reason, the family had been rooted to a particular locale, the placement problem could not have been as readily solved.

Another case involved a boy with an intelligence quotient in the high 50's who was making normal progress in a special class until his mother died, when her son was eleven years old. Two younger sisters found a home with a maternal aunt, but the care of the boy was left to the father. He brought housekeeper after housekeeper into the home but none seemed to get along with the boy. The relationship between the father and son was a friendly one, and they spent most of the father's leisure hours together. The boy got into the habit of not coming home until the time of his father's expected arrival from his work. Before he was thirteen years old he was hobnobbing with a group of slightly older boys who were using him as a dupe, and to furnish them amusement. They dared him to commit acts of destruction and petty thievery, such as taking baked goods from the bakery wagon, and pocket knives from the dime store. Not being able to provide the boy with the home supervision he needed, and fearing that his minor delinquencies might lead to greater ones, the father placed him in the state school. The boy quickly made a good adjustment, and the father looked forward to the time when his son might be returned home to him prepared to carry on some work suited to his abilities.

An overzealous health worker, who believed that all mentally deficient persons should be segregated, some years ago asked the author to advise the mother of a mentally retarded boy of about eight years of age. His IQ had been reported as somewhere around 50. On this basis the health worker had advised the mother that the child should be sent to an institution, and was seeking help to back up her opinion. Investigation revealed that the boy was the only living relative of his widowed mother. At the time of the father's death, when the child was six, the family had owned a modest home with a small acreage in an area at the edge of town. The mother had temporarily rented the place, but hoped to return to it and raise chickens as soon as the boy had reached an age to give her a bit of help.

At the time seen, the mother was employed as a housekeeper in a home for old people which was sponsored by the church with which she was affiliated. The boy was a docile, happy appearing lad who got along well with the residents of the home. The superintendent's wife expressed the opinion that he was good for the old folks, that he furnished many of them with a point of interest. He ran small errands for them. As an example of the understanding shown: when the mother expressed the fear that perhaps her son was being paid in candy for his small favors with greater frequency than was good either for his health or his morale, the superintendent's wife came up with a novel solution. The earnings were placed in a cookie jar provided for the purpose, and along with other goodies, served at a weekly party to which all were invited.

An old lady, an ex-teacher, told stories to the boy and kept a supply of picture books in her room for his pleasure. She taught him to count a bit. An old gentleman played a frequent game with the boy by hiding his glasses and pretending he needed help to find them. Sometimes he would leave them on the top of his head. The pretended surprise of the old man when the lost object was found, and the thank-you that accompanied the finding, was most rewarding to the boy's ego. In short, the boy had the satisfaction of feeling wanted and needed, while at the same time precautions were taken to guard against his becoming a spoiled child. To date he had displayed no disagreeable or uncontrollable behavior. Moreover, the mother's plans for the boy's future were sensible and in line with his potentialities. The semi-rural area might be expected to present fewer social hazards than would a more densely populated one. There were elements of training in his unique placement that could be more than usually effective in training the child to be as considerate and useful as his limitations would allow. The author could find no good reason for depriving the mother of her sole love interest, either as judged by the present or the ultimate good of the child.

In arriving at a decision about the school placement for a mentally retarded child, there are so many things that must be weighed and considered, balanced and counter balanced. Among the cases discussed above, no parent will find a full duplication of his own problem, but it is hoped that he may find some elements of similarity to help in the formulation of his attitudes toward his problem. It is hoped that he will see that all agents at work merit scrutiny, and realize that certain factors bear much greater importance than others. Placement should be based on a study of facilities available, an appraisal of the child's potentialities and his needs, present and future, and an evaluation of all the environmental agents at work to influence his own welfare and the welfare of those about him. Somehow, somewhere, the educable mentally retarded child should be educated to the highest degree possible for him whether it be in the home, in a privately organized group, in a public school special class, in a private school, or in a state school. It should be a forward looking education that aims to teach the individual how to best fit in, where he can best fit in.

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THE MONGOLIAN CHILD

The smiling face of the mongolian imbecile suggests the possession of a secret source of joy. G. A. SUTHERLAND

Because of the frequency with which they appear in families of characteristically superior intelligence, it is deemed wise to direct some discussion to the so-called mongolian. He is the child who when seen in company with another mongolian is apt to be mistaken for a brother or a sister. "They all look alike" is the remark so often heard about them. The mongolian is the child who, because of his affable manner and desire to please, and because he is often the possessor of good rote memory, is apt to be credited by parents and friends with a higher level of intelligence than he actually possesses. Often a parent believes that denial of admission to school is based on prejudice. He thinks that school authorities are influenced by the child's appearance, and that they disregard his intellectual abilities. Perhaps he can count, and recite a few nursery rhymes, and to the parent that appears to be evidence enough of his ability to cope with the learning requirements of school. Unless the school provides special facilities, he soon lags miserably behind if, as occasionally happens, he is permitted a school trial.

The mongolian is so designated because, although not in skin color, he in some ways closely resembles a member of the Mongolian race. The characteristic generally first noted is the obliquity of eyes and eyebrows. The eyes slant toward the nose. The fold of the upper eyelid is markedly developed, and brought down to meet the lower eyelid at a point farther than usual from the nose. The cranium is small. The bridge of the nose and the face itself appear flattened. The skull is flattened from front to back. The tongue is often abnormally large, and may protrude from the mouth. By the time the child is three or four years old, the tongue has acquired transverse fissures which become deeper as the child grows older. Often the lower lip protrudes, and the lower jaw juts out. The skin on the body—except on the cheeks which are often quite rosy—is coarse, and there may be a growth of downy hair on the skin. He usually has small rounded ears with defective lobules. The lines of the palms of the hands vary from normal arrangement. Often there will be a marked transverse line straight across the palm of the hand. The hands are thick and clumsy looking, with short thumbs and little fingers. A handshake with a mongolian calls attention to their softness and flabbiness. It is not uncommon for fingers or toes to be webbed. The foot of a mongolian will usually be short and broad, and clumsily used. The mongolian is short in stature with a long narrow trunk and short legs. The child of ten may appear to be about half that age. The joints of his body, particularly of toes, fingers, wrists, ankles and hips, are unusually mobile. He often sits "cross-legged like a Turk." The abdomen of the mongolian is enlarged. When he is lying down it protrudes above the level of his chest.

Mongolism is an abnormality that is always present at birth. The conditions accounting for it are conditions existing before birth. While some authors give credence to the idea that causitive influences may be hereditary in nature, others categorically state that mongolism is not inheritable. Many environmental possibilities have been suggested as causes of the condition, and many studies have been made, with the conclusions drawn from one sometimes refuting the conclusions drawn from another. The cause has been said to be exhaustion of the reproductive powers of a parent, especially of the mother, or of both parents. This theory was advanced because the mongolian was often the last child in a large family; but many mongolians have been born to young and strong parents, followed by children of normal intelligence. In view of these facts it has been suggested that the environmental causitive factor is a factor which may be found in a younger mother, but is more apt to be found in an older one, but that the factor is not age itself. Some consider the cause to be toxic or infectious attacks upon the foetus. In accordance with the theory that development has been arrested, mongolians are sometimes called "unfinished" or "ill-finished" children. Past and current studies indicate glandular malfunctioning within the mother-to-be as a probable cause of mongolism. The pituitary gland seems to be most often mentioned as the prime one at fault. Much more study in the field of endocrinology in its relationship to mongolism is needed before many positive, proven statements may be made.

The mongolian is usually not a long-lived person. Many die in infancy, and many more during or before their twenties. Some live until their thirties. It is only a small percentage that lives beyond forty. The mongolian is apt to have a congentially weak heart, and be subject to respiratory diseases. Many die from pneumonia or tuberculosis. His good health depends upon his getting plenty of sunshine and fresh air. He needs clothing that will protect him against the cold. Although overdosage is warned against, some doctors believe that thyroid extracts are helpful to the mongolian. Experimentation has for some time been in progress to study the effects of the administration of pituitary extracts. Further research is needed before widespread conclusions may be drawn about the effectiveness of their use.

Mongolians are the possessors of varying degrees of mental retardation. Many of them have IQ's below 50. A few years ago some authorities regarded a mental age of seven as the highest a mongolian could be expected to reach. More recent studies would indicate that this is a fallible statement. Some observers have noted that the number of identifying physical stigmata present seem to correlate fairly closely with the degree of intelligence possessed by a mongolian.

In planning the future of the mongolian, his probable short life span may well be taken into account. If he can live his probably fewer than average years of life in a sheltered atmosphere, with freedom from too much social pressure, but with enough to do to keep him occupied and content, it should be considered that he has, for him, lived well. Whatever is taught him academically should probably mainly consider his more immediate needs and satisfactions. If he is able to learn to read a little, even in only a rote manner, he should be permitted that much, if for no other reason than that he will enjoy doing what others about him are doing. To be sure, if he can read even with a minimum of understanding so much the better. An eleven-year-old mongolian girl with a mental age of five, but with enough rote memory so that she had learned to recite the words on the pages of three or four primers, spent hours reading to her family of dolls. She read for the most part in a monotonous manner, but with an occasional imitative inflection, contented just to repeat the words of the familiar pages. The stamp of disapproval has elsewhere in this book been given to rote reading, but in this case the sense of satisfaction derived by the girl outweighed any normal reading values her ultimate level of mental ability might permit.

If a hobby interest can be found for a mongolian child it will often serve him well on into his later years. Many mongolians have musical interests which are worth developing. Many of the self-do occupations suggested in the following chapter will be applicable to the trainable mongolian child, as will the suggestions on the training of personal habits and habits of usefulness and home adjustment. He readily copies the mannerisms of those about him. It has been said that to discover one's own mannerisms, one has only to associate for a short time with a mongolian and observe what he does. A characteristic manner of walking, sitting, or of posture will be accurately copied by a mongolian. His memory, plus his mimicry, plus his basically sunshiny temperament, may be utilized to build habits within the child to make him a loving and well loved child.

The same general considerations apply to the placement of the mongolian child as to retarded children in general. Occasionally a mongolian will develop behavior traits that are not as enviable as those that have been indicated as ordinarily characteristic. These may furnish the deciding factor that induces a parent to place a child outside of the home. The mongolian child remains much younger in physical appearance than many mentally retarded persons of like chronological age. This gives him a certain advantage in that he is not usually expected to meet adult social requirements. Unless forced into some adult situation where no child would be socially welcome, he stands a good chance of being at least tolerantly accepted. His presence is apt to be acknowledged by friendly greetings, or kindly words, and little acts of attention from which he seems to derive much satisfaction. His childlike appearance, plus his cheery disposition, will often stand him in good stead. As long as he is loved and protected, the mongolian is usually contented with his childlike state no matter what his age.

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THE YOUNG MENTAL RETARDATE

The Mother's heart is the child's schoolroom. BEECHER

Little tasks make large returns. BAYARD TAYLOR

Some mentally retarded children never grow beyond the years of mental infancy, some never beyond a preschool age, while others, although they tarry long before reaching it, arrive at a plane of educability. The chances of learning are multiplied for the retarded child if, before school entrance, he has been well trained at home. If the teacher does not have to devote time to the teaching of things which should have been learned before school entrance, and if the child does not come encumbered with habits and attitudes which must be untaught, his school progress will be much better assured. Naturally, the lower the IQ of the child the longer will be the teaching time required, and the more limited the number of things he may be taught; but it should never be forgotten that even a child with a low IQ may learn more and more things for the period of his lifetime, if someone has the time and patience to teach him. The late Elizabeth Farrell, who because of her pioneer work with them was known as "the handicapped children's tutelary," used to say that there was no child ever born that might not be taught something.

William James once described a baby's state as "a big, booming confusion." It may be assumed that the vague impressions of early infancy remain vague longer for the mentally retarded than for the mentally normal, and that it takes longer for obscure impressions to become lucid ones. It takes the mentally retarded child longer to get control of his bodily movements and make them useful to him. It takes him longer to link what he sees and hears with what he does. When it has been apprehended that an infant is backward, it would appear sensible to keep his physical environment a fairly simplified one, not to clutter it up with too many things, but to try to take some of the bigness out of it, and reduce the noisy "confusion" as much as possible. Surrounding a slow learning baby with too many sights and sounds tends to overwhelm him, rather than to help him to find his way out of the confusions of babyhood.

One of the things watched for in a baby's development is some sign that he prefers one thing to another. Given a choice of articles he consistently reaches each time for some particular one. Too many articles from which to choose may delay, rather than encourage, option in selection. It is a hopeful sign when the slow learner begins to show that there are certain things he would rather have than certain others, or certain things he would rather do. New things should be brought within the range of his attention and reach, but replacements should not be too frequent, nor should all familiar things be removed and replaced by all unfamiliar ones. Something consistently ignored may well be at least temporarily replaced by something more designed to attract his interest. The child who persistently clings to the old, ignoring every new thing that is included in a group of articles from which he chooses, should have new things individually introduced to him to see whether his interest may be enticed. The mentally retarded child tends to stick to the old and the familiar, and sometimes the stage has to be set for him if he is to widen his world; but the widening should be a gradual process, and the vista should not be too wide in scope, nor the panoramic speed too great.

A bright young child learns many things without planned instruction on the part of his elders. Fewer casually learned knowledges may be expected from the young mentally retarded child. Knowledges parentally regarded as essential to a child's growth and development may need to be brought again and again to his attention before they become a part of him. Providing the method of teaching leaves the child feeling satisfied, repetition is not irksome to him. Often the expressed approval by nod, or smile, or word from someone he likes, is sufficient incentive for a mentally retarded child to willingly try again and again. After a parent has forearmed himself with such knowledge as is available about retarded children, his only specific guide in telling him what, and how much, and how fast, is his own good common sense. Much trial and error will be involved, but an intelligent approach, and analytical observation of what seems to stimulate the best responses, will minimize guesswork. In evaluating teaching materials for a young mentally retarded child the parent will need to constantly ask himself the question: Is it something that will add to the child's growth, and is he at the moment capable of learning it?

The physical care of a mentally retarded baby is not essentially different from that of babies in general. Naturally the parent will be required to do more things for the baby for a longer period of time, but the ways of getting him to do things for himself are quite the same. His slowness in learning to walk and talk is often the first inkling that a parent has of a child's retardation. Walking and talking are complex processes, and usually, a child while learning them will be predominately, although not exclusively, concerned with one or the other. He usually slows down in one while devoting major effort to the learning of the other. Mentally retarded children are ordinarily considerably behind average in learning to walk, and even more so in learning to talk. To be sure, acquisition of language, and mastery of its usage, goes on and on long after a child has mastered a useful degree of ambulation. Non-interference is an often heard rule applied to would-be toddlers, but a mentally retarded child will sometimes reach a physical age where his bone and muscle structure are adequate for walking, and yet lack the inclination to do so. Added encouragement is then probably warranted. The use of a walker, helping him to get the feel of taking steps, supplying the necessary support to keep him from falling, protecting him from dangerous falls, along with the incentives of smiles and encouraging words, are surely permissable.

Even after he has learned to walk a retarded child may move about awkwardly. In fact backwardness in the use of all motor equipment often accompanies mental retardation. What should be done to improve motor ability depends upon the type and degree of it, and upon the age and interests of the child. One young mother whose child just never seemed to be able to get a firm hold on anything he grasped, noticed that he never used his thumb in trying to pick up or hold onto something. Thumb opposition is ordinarily acquired by the time a baby is six months old, but for some reason this child had never learned that his thumb had any functional value. The young mother showed the boy his thumb, and taught him the word. They played "thumb" games, picking up objects and putting them in receptacles. In many playful ways she made him thumb conscious. When he forgot to use it she reminded him that he must make his thumb work too. In time her efforts paid off.

The way to become an adept handler of things is to handle them. Playing with blocks, fitting boxes of graduated sizes, putting pegs in holes, fitting books on a bookshelf, and later using crayons, preferably large ones to start with, are only a few possible ways to help the mentally retarded youngster gain manual dexterity.

The father of a mentally retarded boy was separated from his wife and son for a period of two years while serving in the army. He was concerned upon his return home to note the small progress his son had made during his absence. Because he had more than an ordinary interest in athletics, he was most alerted to his son's lack of balance and motor coordination. The father set aside a short daily period which belonged just to his son. Every day the two of them played "Stump the Leader," going up and down steps standing as "tall" as possible, and with left foot, right foot alternation. A tilted board was a "hill" to be climbed. Two parallel chalk marks made a "railroad track," and the father and child were "trains" to be kept on the "track." A ball on a string was an "apple" to be plucked from the tree branch where it hung, calling for stretching and reaching. A narrow board across the child's sand box was a "bridge" to be crossed without losing balance. A clothesline pulley furnished pulling and stretching stunts. There were cardboard boxes to be stepped in and out of in whatever manner the leader indicated. There was a swing into which leader and follower took turns hoisting themselves and standing up straight. There were homemade paddling and rowing devices. The father started with two or three simple stunts, and added to their number and complexity as the progress of the child warranted. Along with all the physical activity came much concomitant language learning. Simple verbal directions accompanied the stunts. "Up the stairs," "down the stairs," "up the hill," "over the bridge," "reach for the apple," "row the boat," etc. When the boy at the age of nine entered a newly organized special class he became a valuable play leader of his classmates.

Assuming that they have reached a natural stage of development equal to demands made upon them, the further development of muscles depends upon their use. Definite training may often be required to rid a child of telltale awkwardness which points to, and accentuates, his retardation. What is here said is not intended for the child with special physical disabilities which require the services of a physiotherapist. Cases requiring such help should of course follow the course of action advised by the specialist.

More cooperation may be forthcoming from the child, and more progress made, if the training is carried on in an atmosphere of play. Aside from stunts like those used by the young father mentioned, there are some which may be used in a supplementary way, and set up as self-play stunts. A basement rumpus room became "my room" for a mentally retarded boy during the hours the other children were at school. A number of devices were rigged up for his use. A barrel hoop was attached to the wall at a height suited to his stature and throwing ability. Every time he succeeded in throwing the ball through the hoop from the line where he stood he chalked up a victory for himself on a scoreboard. His mother said it never seemed to occur to him to make a dishonest recording. Every so often a "test" would be held. When he reached a point where he could score in three successive tries, the distance from the hoop was increased. He had a mattress on which he tried to imitate the tumbling of his brothers. He had a swing which could be pulled to the ceiling when not in use. He had a ladder to climb. He had many play activities that required him to use his muscles.

Individual differences in motor abilities are so varied that no set of rules may be formulated on an age level basis. The child's physical equipment, progress made to date, and responses to attempted training must be relied upon as training guides. Below are listed some types of activities which may be used for self-play or follow the leader stunts:

1. **Walking stunts:** Walking straight or circular lines; draw chalk line designs on the floor. Stepping over objects.
   Walking around objects placed as obstacles without hitting them.
   Starting with right foot; starting with left.
   Going up and down stairs properly.

Marching.
Walking on rounds and sides of ladder placed flat on the ground.
Series of boxes; stepping from box to floor and floor to box without looking at feet.

2. **Jumping:** Jumping lines.
   Jumping sticks and other objects.
   Jumping rope.
   Hopping from point to point on both feet without losing balance.
   Hopping on one foot from point to point.
   Hopping on one foot and keeping to a chalked line.
   Hopping with arms folded.
   Hopping with arms back of head.
   Hopping to avoid ball rolled and aimed at feet.
3. **Stunts with balancing board:** Walking across using cane to assist.
   Walking across using balancing pole.
   Walking across with arms folded.
   Walking across with object on head.
   Walking across with the fewest steps possible.
   Wheeling a toy wheelbarrow across.
   Carrying a tray with tower of blocks on it.
4. **Slapping:** Try to hit the extended hands of another person with a piece of cardboard before the person can withdraw his hands.
   Bean Porridge Hot. (In the beginning use only the motion accompanying the first three words of the verse.)
5. **Picking up:** Using buttons, blocks, seeds, pieces of paper, etc., see how many objects can be picked up in one minute, etc.
6. **Wringing:** Race with time or another person to see how many Mason jar tops can be removed.
   Twirl button molds on a string.
   Spin Tops.
   Spin pie tins.
7. **Throwing:** Bean bags in box or basket.
   Target games.
   Ringing a stake. To begin with, it is suggested that ring be of as large a size as can be conveniently handled.
   Playing catch.
8. **Pushing and Pulling:** Push and pull toys: balancing ball, wheel-

barrow, kiddie car, carts, toy trains and wagons, rocking-horse, hoops, pushmobile.
Race pushing or pulling something. Stretching, and keeping stretched, a piece of elastic tape, for a count of 20.

9. **Stunts involving carrying objects in hands:** Carrying an object in one hand, anything from a book to a container filled with water, while the other hand is: holding another person's hand, moving a chair, opening a door.
10. **Manipulation of hand muscles:** Bead stringing.
    Putting pegs in boards.
    Drawing and painting.
    Cutting out pictures.
    Using sand, clay, and plastic materials.
    Tearing carpet rags.
    Buttoning clothes.
    Lacing shoes.
    Braiding.
    Using hand punch.

Activities which call for relatively finer coordinations should not be introduced until some control has been gained over the larger muscles. Driving nails into soft wood is a favored occupation with many young children. It is a feat which calls for quite a degree of coordination. Special equipment designed to minimize the element of danger may be purchased in many toy departments. Parental judgment must be relied upon to decide which materials are, and which are not, safe in the hands of his child. When a mentally retarded child become capable of constructing crude toys, he will probably show much less creative ability than does the average child of like physical equipment; but shown how to make something of simple design, he is often able to build many things which are recognizable facsimiles, and which he finds satisfactory.

Imitation plays a large part in learning to talk, and the patterns kept before the child should be those of clear enunciation and correct pronunciation. No matter how garbled the sounds, a young child's first attempts at speech are important treasures. His best effort may be "wa-wa" for water, but the important thing is that he is attaching meaning to speech sounds even though he can not accurately reproduce them. The parent who follows his child's lead and says "wa-wa," who becomes the imitator of his child's speech either because he finds it cute or because he thinks he is helping his child by getting down to his level, is forgetting that soon the pattern he is helping his child to imitate will become an unacceptable, but all too well established, one. A child may find these early approved faulty speech habits almost impossible to overcome when he reaches an age where his parents find them embarrassingly objectionable.

The letter omissions and substitutions of the mentally retarded child may need to be patiently accepted for a longer time than would be the case with a brighter child, but the patterns kept before him should be the patterns of good speech. Initial efforts should be devoted to the establishment of interest in wanting to talk, and speech correction at the time is not the main concern, but it is inexcusable for a parent to let a child constantly hear mispronunciations while he is in the struggling stages of acquiring speech. The child with speech difficulties tied to organic or emotional difficulties requires the help of a speech therapist.

There are mentally retarded children who make plenty of effort to talk, who talk a good deal, yet who have not acquired sufficient understanding of language to make it of much use to them. They mainly repeat the speech of others. They are imitative echoers of speech without being comprehensive users of it. The value of speech is to afford a means of communication. A mentally retarded child needs help in the building of language meanings if language is to effectively serve him. This help should start even before his earliest talking days. The parent will need to talk to his child about things near to him that touch him and his everyday life. Names of people and things within his environment, and words which stand for familiar activities, should be pleasantly presented over and over again, until his own usage of them confirms that they have been learned. Encourage him to ask for things he wants and needs. A child who is too lazy to employ speech because he is always able to get whatever he wants without asking for it, may sometimes be induced to use speech by the parent's withholding something until he does ask for it. The withholding should not be accompanied by nagging, and the technique should not be over-employed. However, the withholding of something from a child who is having difficulty with the formulation of the proper speech sounds to express his needs, is more of a deterrant than an accelerant to the learning of speech.

When a mother notes her child's preference for a toy she may repetitively refer to it by name. No natural mother needs to be told how to playfully point to parts of her child's face and body, and to get him to point to her own. Nor does she need to be told how to constantly talk about the things of his daily environment, or the things he does. Sometimes, however, when the speech of a mentally retarded child is long delayed, parental effort to get him to talk diminishes. His parent assumes that his efforts are being wasted. Much and prolonged repetitious talk is needed before the speech of a retarded child becomes voluntary. The vocabulary used should be a rather narrow one with a limitation placed on the amount of skipping about—that is, calling attention to the name of this and then the name of something else in rapid succession. For example, if the word "hand" is being taught, a reasonable amount of concentration placed upon the word will facilitate learning. The child has hands, each member of the family has hands, dolls have hands, all of which may be pointed to and talked about. Of course many words enter into every conversation, and some may be learned without planned concentration, but there should be planned vocabulary additions of words within the child's immediate ken.

Words learned in conjunction with a child's participation in some activity are often words he will voluntarily try to repeat. "Up" and "down" are words a child may readily learn while he is being thrust up and down in a playful manner by his father. Simple directions may be an incentive to language learning. "Throw the ball," "please shut the door," etc. The child's response should be the key as to just how many and how fast new words should be introduced. The choice of words should be determined by the child's probable use for them. Once a mentally retarded child has gotten over the first hump of language acquisition, and has found satisfaction in the use of speech, his desire to use it frequently hastens his learning of it to a marked degree. There may come some slumps in his progress. If one or two words suffice to get across his meaning he may show no inclination to employ phrases and sentences. He may need additional boosts before he progresses from one stage to another in language usage.

Once a child is able to attend to pictures with any genuine degree of interest, a real avenue to vocabulary development has been opened. The same object may be looked at again and again in different pictures. They may be looked at, they may be pointed to, and they may be named. Later, pictures of animate objects may be talked about in terms of what they are doing. It may take some time to get from the "point to the boy" stage to the "What is that?" stage, but the picture book assists in the process. The picture book should not be substituted for contacts with things and actual experiences, but it is a useful medium in the teaching of language and speech to the beginner, and it does naturally and usefully bridge the gap between learning to talk and learning to read.

It is true that it is usually much easier, at least in the beginning, for the parent to do things for the mentally retarded toddler than to go through the painstaking process of teaching him to do for himself; but the child should, in the interests of his self-development, begin as early as possible to take care of his own personal and immediate needs. He should acquire habits of cleanliness, and should gradually learn to dress himself, starting with some simple process like pulling on his own stockings, and advancing to the place where he can put on all of his clothes, including fastening them properly, and tying his own shoelaces. He should have tasks of his own to do about the house, simple easily learned ones at first, moving forward toward the acceptance of tasks of greater responsibility.

The teaching should be carried on in a spirit of fun, but the child should be made to feel that he is doing something helpful and worthwhile. A young mentally retarded girl was learning to do a number of small household duties. Her mother's reward for a task well done was, "I couldn't do it any better myself." The child when calling the attention of others to her accomplishments would say, "Mother couldn't do it no better." One day her father said "Nobody could do it any better." Thereafter when seeking approval for a task completed she would ask, "Could nobody do it no better?"

Emptying ashtrays, emptying wastebaskets, bringing mother the dust cloth, putting articles away—any simple tasks which actually need to be done furnish starting points for teaching habits of helpfulness in the home. Even the mentally retarded toddler, providing he has an easily accessible place where they are consistently kept, may be taught some measure of care for his toys—providing also that a satisfyingly playful attitude, rather than a scolding one, is maintained. A reminder that it is time to play "the put-away game" is often sufficient impetus. Playfully helping the child to carry an article to the chest or shelf where it is kept is often incentive enough. Or, "I am going to put away the book, what are you going to put away?" Or, if the direction is needed, "You put away the doll, I'll put away the book" may do the trick. To start with, the child's responsibility may be for only a single article, but if he sees his parent putting things away as if he really enjoyed the experience, rather than as if it was a distasteful task which must be done, the child often finds that he wants to help too. Of course a child's effort at helpfulness should never go unrewarded by expression of approval.

Play materials suitable for the younger mentally retarded child are essentially the same as those that have play value for any young child. When he is at the grasping, pick-up, put-in-the-mouth stage of his development, articles should be chosen that are easy to pick up, cleanable, non-destructible, and that have no sharp edges or corners. Things to pull and to push should be chosen because of a child's ability to learn to safely and effectively manipulate them. Eventually comes the scooter or other child-propelled vehicle.

Other suggestions are blocks of various sizes and shapes, different sized boxes, the all important sandbox, and the much favored "jungle gym." Toys that are miniatures of articles used by grownups usually find favor. Brooms and dust pans are often as well liked by boys as by girls. Both sexes prefer playthings which give them opportunity to simulate adults. Toy carpenter tools are ordinarily much prized possessions—if they work. Sometimes replicas of articles used by grownups are so fragilely and impractically constructed that they cannot be manipulated in a manner to produce satisfactory results. Such toys have minimum educational value. Garden tools are valuable only if they are sturdily built so that a child can rake, spade, and hoe without having his tools break at the first attempt to use them.

Playthings should not be chosen because they are prettily fashioned, but because they can be realistically used. A doll to be set on a shelf is of little satisfaction to a little girl who wants to play at being a mother, but one that can be dressed and undressed may be a source of much enjoyment. Crayons that don't break at first applied pressure, plenty of manilla drawing paper, bluntpointed scissors, discarded magazines containing plenty of pictures—all these are basic equipment for any child of preschool mental age.

As the time approaches when it is deemed wise to try him out in a school situation—unless he is fortunate enough to be enrolled with some group where activities do not exceed kindergarten level, and where his reading readiness, if existent, will be observed—he should be tried out from time to time and signs of interest in books noted. The picture book has been mentioned. His first ones should be the cleanable, non-tearable type. The pictures should be of objects which stand out clearly by themselves, and the eye should not be tempted to wander to a background cluttered by extraneous objects. The eye appeal should be readily centered on the picture of the object a child is supposed to be able to identify. The first books used will serve a better purpose if they are short. As a child's progress foretells his readiness, books may grow lengthier, and individual pictures more complex in nature, until the story book or beginning reader stage is reached. Even then the contents should continue to deal with the familiar in a child's life. The time for leading him into the land of the strange does not come until considerable facility in reading has been attained.

The parent should begin his teaching of good social behavior long before his child may be expected to practice such behavior. The initial step in the teaching of good manners and in the development of thoughtful attitudes should be exemplification. The child who has heard "Please" and "Thank you" over a long period of time will in due time adopt their use. A mentally retarded child will tend to remain individualistic, rather than cooperative, for a longer period of time than does the child of normal intelligence, but he can be taught that "mine" is not the only possessive pronoun in the English language. He should, however, have property rights of his own which are treated with respect. He should have his turn to do things at the same time he is learning that there are others who deserve turns.

Habits of thoughtfulness may be inculcated if there is opportunity to perform little daily acts of thoughtfulness: getting father's slippers, hanging up mother's coat, voluntarily releasing grandfather's favorite chair upon his appearance. Everyday life is filled with chances to make the practice of thoughtfulness habitual. Expressed thanks for kindness shown is what instills within a child a desire to be thoughtful. The mentally retarded child loves approval.

Good table manners should be taught as early as possible. The proper use of table utensils, to take reasonably sized bites of food, to eat slowly, to politely ask for food or wait until it is passed, to stay at the table until others leave or he has been excused, are all possible attainments for a child old enough to sit at the table. As with all children, the mealtime is no time for unpleasantness and punishment, but that does not exclude possibilities of training. One mother, whose mentally retarded daughter had acquired acceptable table manners before her entrance into a private school at the age of nine, said that most of the girl's training had taken place while the two of them ate their lunch together in the absence of the rest of the family. Up until the time she acquired reasonably acceptable table manners she ate with the grownups in the family only once a week. During the week there was definite effort made to improve this or that eating habit. On the night she ate her dinner with the entire family, she was commended by her father, her older brother, and her grandfather for improvement shown, or a new habit formed. Because a child is mentally retarded he need not continue through life eating in a gluttonous or ill-mannered way. Any child who is able to sit at a table is able to acquire at least a semblance of good table manners. As in Stevenson's verse, he should

> . . . behave mannerly at table;
> At least as far as he is able.

The mentally retarded child shows immaturity in his play interests. As has been said, his lesser motor abilities, as well as his lesser intelligence, will often make him an inept participant in games and stunts with children of like chronological age, since his play interests are more related to his mental age than to his chronological age. If he is not over six or so mentally, he may find his place with some group of younger children. Beyond that mental age he appears to become more aware of differences in physical size.

While a homogeneous play group is the best answer to a mentally retarded child's play problems, circumstance may rob him of his chance to find a group of children who like to do the things he does and who can do them about as well. Rather than subject him to the humility of rejection by some available play group, it may be necessary for family members to plan short, but regular, substitute play periods in which they adapt themselves to the child's levels of interest and ability. A number of self-play activities should be made available to him, but not to the exclusion of companionable play. Only by playing with others can he be expected to learn the meaning of fair play. The parent should, of course, comb his area for play or nursery schools that might afford group play opportunities for his child. When substitute activities are offered to compensate for lack of opportunity to play with other children, they should be something the child can do reasonably well, and for which he receives pleasurable notice for his part in them.

A mentally retarded child should be encouraged to follow his own play leads, but when, as it often will, initiative fails, or if the self-chosen activity is an undesirable one, then the best interests of the child will be served if there is someone ready and willing to suggest a happy play interest. The child who has plenty of other things to do is less apt to seek to do that for which he is not qualified.

In too many cases during a mentally retarded child's before-school years, much attention is given to seeing that his physical needs are well taken care of, and that he is provided with whatever is believed will make him happy, but relatively little thought is given to his training. Actually, the effectively trained child is happier than a pampered one. The preschool years of a mentally retarded child usually demand more of a mother's time than do his later years, providing of course those later years are well planned for. As Wordsworth said of the mother of the blind boy:

> For was she here, or was she there,
> She thought of him with constant care,
> And more than mother's love.

Appended are a few games and devices for use with mentally retarded children with lower mental ages. It is believed their purposes are self explanatory.

1. **Hearing Games:** *What Animal?* Guess animals from imitative sounds—bow-wow, cock-a-doodle-do, etc.
   Where is the Cat? Child is blindfolded. Tries to find cat by following sound of a small bell rung by a fellow player.
   Music Game. The teacher plays the piano, frequently bringing in a short familiar strain. The child stands up every time the familiar strain is played and sits down as soon as it is over.

2. **To Teach Color:** *Colored Objects.* Objects used in teaching color should be decidedly red, decidedly green, etc., not shades and tints. Doll dresses from which to choose and name the choice; crayons to name and choose; paper hats. A chance to choose a paper hat to wear may be the reward for this or that.
   Color Game. Find all the objects of a named color either in the room or from a group of objects.
   Color Game. Place three colored objects, alike except for the color, before the child. After looking at them the child closes his eyes. One object is removed. Upon opening his eyes he is to name the color of the missing object.

3. **Touch Games:** *Mystery Bag.* Put one object in a cloth bag, say a spoon. Let the child try to identify the object by feeling it. To vary the game, put two or three previously identified objects in the bag and specify by name which object is to be found through touch.
   Blindfold Game. While blindfolded try to put on rubbers, coat, and hat, or lace shoes before teacher stops counting to a certain number.

4. **Observation Games:** *What I Saw.* The child takes a walk about the room or yard and then tells all the things he remembers having seen.
   What's in the Picture? The child looks at a picture for a few minutes and then with the picture removed from sight, relates what he saw.
   Look and Remember. A number of objects are placed on the table. After the child has looked at them for a time, they are covered and he recalls to memory as many as he can.
   Touch and Remember. Two players are required. The first player touches some object in the room and names it. The second player

touches the same object and names it, then adds an object. The game goes on until one of the players can no longer remember all the objects touched.

5. **Hiding Game:** *Hide the Thimble.* This old game is well liked by many retarded children.

6. **Sorting Games:** *Sorting Objects.* Given a group of objects, as for example beads, pegs, and small blocks, a child old enough to use them in his play should be able to separate them into piles putting like articles with like.
   Picture Sorting. Put all pictures of children in one pile, all of animals in another, all of houses in another, etc.
   Word Sorting. After a child is able to sort pictures, try him on word sorting. A picture of a girl will have the word "girl" attached, etc. After several trials, try using just the word cards without the aid of attached pictures and see if the child can sort them. When the child can sort words, he is approaching a state of readiness to learn to read.
   Letter Sorting. Use three sets of alphabet letters. The purpose of letter sorting is not to teach the names of letters but to find out if the child can observe differences in how they look. Do not give him entire sets of jumbled alphabets at first, but try him out on two or three letters which are distinctively different in appearance.

7. **Attending to Details:** Pictures may be pasted or drawn on uniform sized sheets of manila paper for easy handling. It is suggested that sets of three be used, one set containing pictures of girls, another of boys, another of houses, etc. No two pictures in any one set are identical. They may be used in connection with improvised stories. To illustrate their use: The story teller picks out three or four sets of pictures to suggest the theme of her story. The story might go as follows: "Judy lived in a big house with two chimneys on it." The set of three houses is presented. The child selects from the set the only picture of a house with two chimneys on it. The story goes on, "Because Judy was going to see her grandmother she put on her new red hat." After the picture that fits the description is found: "When Judy got to her grandmother's house she rang the doorbell. Her grandmother, who had been making

cookies, and had her apron on, opened the door for Judy." It is easy to see how the story might be continued to get Judy back home to the house with the two chimneys on it. Pictures with varying details may be used in many ways to teach the child to look for them. From the pictures selected to illustrate the story, the child may be induced to retell it.

- 8 -

THE PARENT OF A MENTALLY RETARDED CHILD AS HIS TEACHER

What the teacher is is more important than what she teaches.
DR. KARL MENNINGER

From the moment his child gives any evidence of ability to learn, the parent becomes his natural teacher. Nothing can replace the school for broadening a child's education, but the hours spent there are limited, and the child's learning is not confined to those hours. Since the casual learnings of a mentally retarded child are far fewer than those of the average learner, the parent's responsibility as a teacher is increased. It is not proposed that the parent of the child who is a school attendant shall spend long hours teaching him to read, write, spell, add, and subtract. Additional help in the formal aspects of academic subjects should be only at the suggestion of the teacher of the subjects. The classroom teacher will welcome, will in fact feel dependent upon, parental assistance in building acceptable social habits, strengthening vocabulary, and helping the child to widen his horizon of experiences.

It is a common lament of special class teachers that so many of their pupils come to school with fewer knowledges of the common essentials of life than their capacities to learn would permit. There are some things that the school can do better than the home, and others that the home can do better than the school, and when the two work together a child's learning opportunities are immeasurably increased. The very fact that he is a parent, providing he maintains parental contact with his child, forces him into the role of teacher. Whether the parent of a mentally handicapped child is a good, bad, or mediocre teacher depends largely upon the application of certain fundamental teaching principles.

The parent's first duty as a good teacher is to obtain as complete and full knowledge as he can of his child's physical, mental, and emotional makeup. He should become as fully aware as possible of his child's abilities and disabilities. His attitude should be to make as much as possible of the child's present abilities, and correct insofar as is possible his disabilities.

Before persistently trying to teach his child something, he should ask himself the question, "Is my child capable of learning this at this time?" If he believes that the thing to be taught is within the scope of his child's comprehension and ability to master, he should evaluate the material to be taught in terms of its probable usefulness to the child. It is possible to teach a slow learning child a great many things whose only reward in the learning is the satisfaction of knowing that he has pleased his parent. There is such a thing as becoming overly analytical in the choice of teaching materials, but since time is short and the pace is slow, it is certainly not justifiable to spend protracted periods of time attempting to teach something which if learned will have no important value for the learner. Since curtailment is necessary, since the mentally retarded person will never live long enough to learn many of the things that the average person of normal intelligence finds profitable or enjoyable to know, considerable thought should be given as to what to teach and what to leave untaught.

Sometimes something a child finds pleasure in learning may in itself be of no great consequence, but may carry with it concomitant learnings of considerable value. Sometimes the learning of some minor skill or knowledge may serve to establish self-confidence in a child. An insignificant thing well done, and well praised, may be the beginning of pride in good workmanship.

Learnings which lead to a degree of self-sufficiency, to a lessening of dependency on others, are worthwhile even though the specific knowledge or skill learned at the moment may be in itself a thing of slight worth. Happiness in doing is often excuse enough for the doing. Any learning, seemingly unimportant in itself, which serves to open up a child's interest in more important learnings, is a legitimately worthwhile one.

A child will attend better, work more zealously and persistently, when pursuing some activity coincident with his interests. The desirability of utilizing the needs and interest of the mentally retarded child cannot be overemphasized. The interests of the mentally retarded child will usually lie close at home. Whether or not a mentally retarded child knows that London is the largest city in the world is of minor importance. Whether or not he knows how to get about in his own environment, and make use of many of the resources of it, is of major importance. Exploratory excursions broaden his experiences and furnish him with a wide field of possible interests. Travel and reading may broaden his interests, but he can't travel much intellectually abroad until he has learned how to intellectually explore his home area.

It is unwise to try to teach a mentally retarded child something before he is mentally mature enough to learn it. More damage than good may be done. The special class teacher is all too familiar with the child who comes to her class with the stamp of failure imprinted all over him. He is the child who has spent more sitting hours in a regular classroom than learning hours, because what was placed before him to learn was placed there too soon. Requiring a child prematurely to struggle with that which he is not yet ready to learn only deadens interest, and lessens effort. However, there are many things, usually less academic, which may be as readily learned at five or six as at twelve. Something which has value or interest for one child may not have the same value or interest for another. It is a futile waste of time to try to have a child learn things beyond his present comprehension. The usual result is an attitude of distaste which may interfere with learning when sufficient maturity has been reached.

Lack of mental maturity is not the only cause of lack of interest and effort. When causes other than mental age account for indifference or lack of industry, if a thing to be taught is essential to a child's welfare, the parent's ingenuity must be relied upon to find new and different teaching approaches than those already tried. If interest and effort are to be maintained at their highest level, the parent in his teaching must begin down where his child is in experiences, knowledges, and skills; down where he is mentally, educationally, and emotionally. The point of departure should be sufficiently low; the ultimate goal the highest possible for the child as measured by his mental level and his needs.

The teacher of the mentally retarded child early learns the necessity for being specific, and for instructing in a detailed manner. He learns through planned and repetitive contacts. He is slow to make generalizations, and information acquired in one situation may not be carried over to another where it applies. He may not see that bouncing a ball four times involves the same number concept as counting four objects. Nor can he be left to discover for himself the relationship between a principle and its corollary. In order for him to understand, facts must be presented to him item by item, and step by step, and over and over, and as concretely as possible.

Although much repetition is necessary, it does not follow that facts must always be presented over and over in the same manner, nor in a humdrum fashion. It is not expected, nor would it be desirable, that a child will be exposed to a never-ending round of spectacular events, but conscious effort should be made to present facts as vividly as possible. To watch a butterfly emerge from its cocoon will leave its impression, whereas pages of nature study read may be quickly forgotten, if at all comprehended. Bargaining over the counter of a toy store is a more effective way of teaching a child how to make change than is drill in subtraction problems.

The law of multiple response is applicable to the learning of all, but the slow learner needs to meet the same thing in more places than does the average person before he comprehends its meaning. To be told that a block is red is not enough for the young retardate to learn the color red. The doll's dress is red, his chair is red, his top is red, etc. To learn to read a word and recognize it every time he sees it requires that he see it in many contexts. Just to read the word over and over by itself, or to read the same sentence containing the word over and over, is no assurance that he has actually learned to read the word. To be sure, to place the word in a sentence that has a lot of unfamiliar words in it is no help to the learner. If he can meet the unknown enough times in different but familiar surroundings, and if it be in itself not too difficult for his understanding, then the unknown has a better chance to become the known more quickly than as if it had been met only in isolated or unfamiliar surroundings.

Needless to say, discouragement should be avoided. Praise should be given on the basis of effort rather than accomplishment. It is desirable that whenever possible success be tangible to the child himself; it should not always be necessary for him to have to wait to be told that he has succeeded. It is better when the task itself defines success. It is also better if a child's recognition of success precedes his parent's praise of it, although that added incentive should not be omitted. There are some situations where the child is dependent upon his parent to tell him whether or not a task has been satisfactorily completed, or to tell him whether he is right or wrong. As a matter of fact a child must learn how to meet failures, but the chance of failure should be minimized as much as possible for the mentally retarded child. And he should always be praised for having done his best.

Every teacher is a curriculum maker. The parent as a teacher has to decide what it is that, aside from those things his child has learned casually, he will try to teach him. As has been suggested, the child's needs, and in particular his present needs, furnish the most reliable guide to the selection of materials to be taught. While the parent's main concern should be the teaching of those habits and attitudes that will aid his child in making acceptable social adjustments, he will also want him to know certain facts, and how to do certain things that will aid him in his everyday living. Informational learning, wisely chosen, need not be opposed to the learning of desirable habits and attitudes. To a considerable degree habits and attitudes are concomitant learnings. What habits and attitudes accompany the acquisition of facts and skills depends in large measure upon how those facts and skills are taught.

What are some of the knowledges a parent may deem useful to his child? The child needs to know how to protect himself against common physical dangers. He needs to know how to keep himself bodily clean, and to be acquainted with some of the commonly accepted rules for keeping healthy. He should be able to perform such tasks as serve to make him a useful member of the household. It is desirable that he know some of the attributes of common things with which he comes in contact, and to be able to use the descriptive terms commonly applied to them. He needs to know color. He needs to know common shapes. He needs to know within limits the size of things. Something is very long, or very tall, or very short. He needs to know these things to help him as a listener, and as an informer. He needs to know how to describe the weather in the parlance of the casual weather describer. He needs to have some concepts of time.

What the child of educable degree needs to know of the three R's will be more fully discussed in the following chapters. The chapters dealing with Reading, Writing and Spelling, Arithmetic, and Social Studies (Chapters 10 to 13 inclusive), are primarily applicable to children who have attained mental ages of five and above. The parent of a child of lesser mental age may want to defer his reading of those chapters until such time as they may be more useful to him.

Many of the qualities that are to be found in a good parent may also be found in a good teacher, and vice versa. One molds the life of his child, the other the life of his pupil through the quality of example. Each reveals himself through his emotional composure, and by his attitudes towards people and things. If there is a bond of love between exemplifier and child, concrete evidences of qualities exhibited will be emulated by the child. Both the good parent and the good teacher know that a happy doer is a happy learner, that passivism does not spell growth. Each will help the child to have opportunities for success, and will see that success is somehow rewarded. Each will find the greatest source of his teaching strength within the child himself.

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THE MENTALLY RETARDED CHILD AND HIS LANGUAGE

I profess not talking; only this—let each man do his best.
WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

Given the best of environments and the best of teaching guidance the mentally retarded child will be backward in his language development.
CHARLOTTE INGRAM

There is a close relationship between language and general intelligence, yet seldom is a mentally retarded individual educated in language usage to the point where he can "do his best." A parent who has waited long for his child to use speech in its simplest forms, who has spent untold energy in trying to get his child to talk, who even after his child has uttered a few baby words sees little hope that he will ever be able to use more than those few words, is apt to get discouraged and let down in his teaching efforts, and usually at a time when they would pay off most in terms of vocabulary increase. Another practice, as the child grows older, is to steal time from the teaching of language in order to teach him other things whose importance is more easily recognized, but whose comparative value is less.

No amount of language training can be expected to transform a mentally retarded person into a profound thinker, but he might be able to think better than he does if he had more words with which to weave his thoughts. Even as wise a philosopher as John Dewey emphasized language as an imperative tool for thinking. What the mentally retarded child talks about will depend not solely on his mental age, but also on what he sees, hears, and does; but he cannot talk about these things unless he has the appropriate words with which to express himself. In homes where there is loving concern about his welfare, the mentally retarded child will not usually suffer from a paucity of experiences, but his mental growth may be stunted by lack of opportunity to talk about them. Parent-child conversations offer constant chances to slip in new words and phrases whose meaning may be gained from context, or may require explanation.

Family members are the natural teachers of language to the mentally retarded child, and if he is attending school his educational progress may be furthered more by attention to increased language understanding, than by equal time expended in the home teaching of any of the other tool subjects, and usually with less strain on both child and parent. The three R's are usually talked about as if they were the most fundamental knowledges in a child's education, but language is a prerequisite for each of them, and for social integration as well.

If our desire to communicate with a mentally retarded person is sincere and earnest, our conversations directed to him should be carried on in simply worded sentences; but the larger his store of language meanings, the greater the number of ideas may be exchanged.

A mentally retarded child should not be included in every adult conversation within the home, but he should, if his degree of ability at all permits, be allowed to sit in on some of the family "confabs" and, if he desires or can be encouraged to do so, put in his two cents worth. If at all possible he should have a short period each day that belongs to him conversationally, a time when he is encouraged to talk, to tell father what he has been doing during the day, to talk to someone about some interesting experience, or about some work or play project planned or under way, or any other subject that linguistically unties his tongue.

Remembering that the mentally retarded child is not to any extent a casual learner, the parental ear should be tuned to pick out, from conversations heard by the child, common words the child has not yet learned to use, or which may have special interest value for him. Later when parent and child are alone the conversation may be reopened and meanings clarified.

Good or bad speech is a matter of habit, and the child tends to take on the speech habits of his intimate associates. If a purpose of language training is to add to a mentally retarded person's social prestige, the speech goal for him should probably be to learn to talk as well as do other members of his ultimate social group. If, by the time he has reached maturity, his speech habits approximate this goal it may be considered that he is doing unusually well.

Having enough language background to understand what is going on about him conversationally is of more importance than exact grammatical usage. Corrections should be chiefly confined to gross errors. There is no need to feel concerned if a mentally retarded person ends his sentences with prepositions. Lots of learned people do. But the person who says, "I done it," or "them apples," may, depending upon the rigidity of the speech standards of his current companions, be looked at with eyes askance. If without sacrificing spontaneity of speech an error may be quickly corrected by the immediate substitution of the right form, the immediacy of the correction has learning value. However, corrective interruptions should be avoided if they either disrupt spontaneity of speech, or cause embarrassment. To avoid teaching in isolation, at the correctional period words should naturally be brought back into the conversation. If a child was talking about his garden to someone and used the incorrect form "growed" the parent could say, "This morning you were talking to Aunt Kitty about your garden. Tell me again some of the things you grew in it." Elicit from the child as many repetitions of the word "grew" as are naturally forthcoming.

If narratives are wisely chosen, story telling may play an important part in the language development of a child. The imaginations of retarded children are not too elastic and cannot be stretched too far. A child may get pleasure out of a talking animal character, or have his funny bone tickled by an animal or person with absurdly unreal characteristics, but it cannot be expected that his imagination may be stretched to a point where he understandingly interprets symbolical figures.

Stories read to mentally retarded children should be carefully chosen. Wise and plentiful use of pictures helps to sustain interest. They are especially essential to the needs of the younger child. There are many beautifully illustrated, sensibly written books, available for use with younger children. However, an otherwise suitable story book may fail to interest the mentally retarded child if it has too much (often non-essential) detail, or too much language. When the child who is sitting by his parents wants to turn the page before its reading has been completed, it should be taken as an indication that the contents of the page need to be condensed into fewer words, and perhaps into more comprehensible language. In order to cut the size of the story down to where it agrees with the child's digestability, the parent may need to improvise as he reads, omitting details, simplifying language.

A mentally retarded child will often get fun out of dramatizing pictures. Pictures with easily interpretable actions or attitudes are chosen. A few pictures are placed on display. The dramatizer chooses one of the pictures and through his poses and actions gives clues which will help the guesser to pick out the right picture. The poser asks, "Which picture am I?" The answer might be, "The man with the hoe," "The old woman sitting down," "The little girl crying," etc. Of course pantomiming may be used without aid of pictures if a child has sufficient originality, or if an older person assumes the role of mime often enough for the child to learn a few poses.

The need of a mentally retarded person for written language is much more limited than his need for oral language. Such written work as it is done should be as well done as possible. For the most part, simple one-clause sentences will serve to get meaning across. Their use frees the writer from grammatical involvements, and simplifies punctuation. Assuming his ability to learn these things, he should probably at least be taught to use capitals at the beginnings of sentences and for proper nouns, and the use of the period or the question mark at the end of a sentence.

Webster defines language as "a body of words and methods of combining words used and understood by a considerable community." In that considerable community will be certain persons with whom the mentally retarded person may have desire to communicate. Aside from his utilitarian need for language, there is also his equally important social need. Platitudinous remarks and opinions pass uncriticized in many social groups, and even if a mentally retarded conversationalist has little comprehension of the meaning of his trite expression, if his use of some packaged remark has a pleasantly socializing effect upon him, it has served a purpose. The greater the proportion of the common body of language that is his, the greater are the chances for the mentally retarded person to become socially integrated.

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THE MENTALLY RETARDED CHILD AND HIS READING

Understand thou what thou readest. ACTS 8:30

The important socializing influence that language as a medium of communication has upon the life of a mentally retarded individual was discussed in the previous chapter. Admittedly it is an influence usually recognized only vaguely by the child. Reading, however, is something that he recognizes as grown up and important. He sees his brothers carrying books back and forth from home to that seat of all learning, school. He sees the adult members of his family reading their newspapers and books. In the minds of the young, reading and learning may be synonymous. A young mongolian boy was the member of a family that sometimes amused itself by playing charades. When it came the boy's turn to dramatize something he invariably, with open book in hand, mimicked one or another member of the family in a characteristic reading pose. A child's esteem for reading may later wane, but during at least his preschool years he looks upon it with respect.

Next to the acquisition of enough language to satisfy social needs, reading holds top importance in the list of tool subjects. In the opinion of the author, any child with any amount of ability to learn to read should have the opportunity to have that ability developed. Mentally retarded children who never got beyond the primer stage have been observed to carry their limited reading interests well past their teens and to keep their childish books about them and read them again and again.

The initial concern of the parent in helping his child to learn to read should be to help him to get ready for the learning. A common parental mistake is to try to teach a retardate to read before he is ready for the task. Many retarded children reach mental maturity with a minimum of reading ability merely because formal reading instruction was started too early. The natural incentive of a child to want to learn to read is displaced with a hatred for the subject when he is confronted with mechanical processes too difficult at the age they are presented to him. Experience has taught that it is unwise to begin formal instruction in reading until a child is around six years old mentally. Even then other considerations should be met before intensive reading instruction is attempted. The child should have accumulated a wealth of experiences which will give meaning to reading content. He should have a sufficient speech vocabulary to be able to construct short, simple stories around his experiences.

The retardate can gain considerable appreciation of reading as a meaningful process before he seriously tries to read from the printed page with its numerous mechanical difficulties. He may learn that written and printed words are conveyors of meaning. The child's own name may be attached to his clothing, or used to indicate where clothing should be hung, or to indicate ownership of picture books. Printed signs with accompanying pictures to clarify meanings may sometimes be substituted for oral direction. One mother referred to this device as the "no talk" game. Illustrative phrases: "Brush your teeth," "Wash your hands," "Hang up your coat," "Get ready for bed," etc. The intended purpose, rather than at the moment to actually teach the child to read, is to help him appreciate the idea that reading is to convey thought; this may be nullified if there is constant checking to see if he can read the words. An occasional playful check up, covering the picture and showing only the words, but allowing the child the use of the picture when response is not forthcoming, is permissible. Persistent questioning, "What does this say?" or "What is that word?" may defeat the intended purpose to teach the child that reading is a means of communication. If he casually picks up some word recognition so much the better, but that is not the main goal at the moment. If he knows no more than that the words accompanying the picture tell him something, an important and often omitted step has been taken.

Printed cards bearing words like Father, Mother, or the names of brothers or sisters, may be attached to the garments of their owners during their less busy moments. The child is furnished with duplicate cards to be matched to those family members are wearing. Pictures of persons he knows may be used in like manner. Names of objects in the house may be placarded and used in a matching game. Action word cards may be used, as Stand up, Sit down, Run, Walk, etc. Concentration on an action word may be increased by combining exposure of the card with verbal instruction. To illustrate: The teacher holds up the card Walk and says, "to the table." That action performed, she holds up the same card again and says, "backwards." Again she may hold it up and say, "with your hands on your hips." Not only is the child learning to recognize the word "walk," but he is also increasing his understanding of language meanings.

Then there is that time-honored and useful device of letting a child sit by his parent as he reads a favorite story, stopping to let the child read the parts he has learned by heart, with the parent guiding the child's fingers as he says the words.

The books the young retardate has about him should be carefully chosen to suit the child's levels of interest and comprehension. The parent's best guide in the choice of books is the child's present mental age. For the child with a mental age of three or four, choose books listed as suitable for the average three-or four-year-old. Many bookstores can furnish valuable assistance in indicating books suited to different age levels. The use of picture and story books for the young retardate has been commented upon earlier. (See Chapter 7.) Of the games appended to that chapter, the Sorting Games and Attending to Details are intended as aids to the building of reading readiness.

The child's interest in himself and his experiences furnish the best starting point in his learning to read. A story may not be more than a single sentence, or even a phrase. But, put it down on paper with an illustrative picture drawn or pasted on the page, and the child is on his way to a story book all his own. The self-experience approach helps to get away from undesirable rote reading, so often observed in retarded children. If the story is printed for his self-made reader, rather than if written by hand, it will be more helpful to his making the transition to the printed primer or pre-primer. Whatever is used as an instrument for printing these child-made stories should turn out a legible product. The letters should be clear, kept in line, and properly spaced. The use of a typewriter with larger than standard-sized type is particularly helpful. It turns out printing quickly and accurately. Incidentally, in the interest of the preservation of eyesight, soft colored, non-glazed paper should be used.

The mentally retarded child should not be bogged down with too many new words to learn at once. The more times a new word appears, without long lapses between seeing the word, the better are his chances of learning it. His reading vocabulary should be based on his speaking and listening vocabulary. There is no point to having a child read a book over and over until he can read it without error. With a known word or two as a clue, he may be able to rattle off a whole page because it has been learned by rote. To read many books with a considerable overlapping of vocabulary, and a small percentage of new words, furnishes the child with greater satisfactions and greater learning. A story read and enjoyed may well be worth re-reading, but reading one over and over for drill purposes is not recommended.

The retarded child needs reading to help him get about safely and independently. If he is at all able to go about by himself, street signs, transportation vehicle signs, and traffic signs are useful and necessary reading material. The retarded child should be able to read the danger signs with which he may come in contact: Danger, Beware, Fire Exit, Poison, etc. If the child learns little else except this so-called "tin-can" type of reading, his reading experiences may be counted worthwhile.

The mentally retarded child who has reached a pre-primer or primer stage in his reading, is going to need practice and more practice. Whatever the material used for basic instruction, much supplemental teaching will be needed. Just to ask a young retarded reader to read a page, supplying for him the words his hesitation indicates he does not recognize, and then tomorrow to assume that he will be able to read the page by himself, is expecting too much. If they are to be retained in his memory, the practice of printed words or phrases should be not too far removed from the reading of them on the pages of his book. Practice which precedes the reading of the page often makes the initial reading more enjoyable. Below are a few exercises intended to help the teacher of the young retardate who is beginning to learn to read.

1. **Preliminary Instruction.** In introducing a new story to be read, some preliminary talk about a picture or pictures accompanying it can offer teaching value. For example, new words to be introduced might be *uncle, farm,* and *pig*. The teacher uses flash cards with these words printed on them. Her conversation might be as follows, "This is a story about Larry's visit to his uncle's farm. Show me the uncle in the picture." After the child has pointed to the picture she shows a flash card and says, "Here is the word uncle."

As each word is thus introduced, the child finds and points to the word in the story itself.

2. **Picture Coloring.** There are many inexpensive coloring books available with pictures in them which might be related to the child's reader. To illustrate follow up work for the story in 1: Show the word *pig*. The child looks through his book to find a picture of a pig. After he has found and colored the picture, the word *pig* is printed beside it.
3. **Drawing Pictures.** If a child can draw objects that are at all recognizable he may be supplied with words, phrases, or sentences which need to be practiced or tested which lend themselves to illustration.
4. **Picture Finding.** Using old magazines let the child find pictures to match word cards given him one at a time. The pictures may be cut out and mounted for future use. The proper word or phrase should be printed on the back.
5. **Matching Words and Pictures.** Pictures are placed along a ledge in full view of the child. The teacher holds word or phrase cards corresponding to the pictures. As she exposes a card the child finds the appropriate picture. If right he wins the picture, if wrong he is shown the proper picture and it is replaced on the ledge to be later identified. The game is continued until all the pictures have been won.
6. **Making up Stories.** Using words which need practice, the teacher, writing as she goes and getting as much help in composition from the child as she can, makes up short stories. After the story has been completed and read through once, while the teacher is translating the story into print the child is hunting for a picture that may be cut out to illustrate the story. Mounted in scrap books, the stories soon comprise a story book all the child's own to look at and read in his leisure.

Any mentally retarded child, with any measurable capacity for learning to read, deserves to have it developed to the full extent of his needs and interests. How completely his interests are captured and held will depend upon his state of readiness when formal instruction in the art is first begun, and upon the account-ability that is taken of his natural rate of learning. Continued interest in reading during the years he is exposed to instruction will probably be closely related to his achievement in reading. If he reads well what he is required to read, he will like to read, and will be more apt to retain his interest in reading after formal instruction has been discontinued.

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THE MENTALLY RETARDED CHILD AND HIS WRITING AND SPELLING

> *After he learned to write he was scratching his name everywhere. Sometimes he would write it down by the crick bank and leave it until the waves would blot it out.*
>
> DENNIS HANKS, a relative,
> speaking of Abraham Lincoln.

> *There is a solemn conviction that the chief end of education is to learn to spell.*
>
> EDWARD EGGLESTON, in
> *The Hoosier School Master*

A child ordinarily needs no artificial incentives to create a desire to learn to write. He begins his meaningless scribbles at an early age and invites others to look at his "writing." The ability to write his name is a treasured attainment. He likes to tag his possessions with his name. If he has made a drawing, he likes to tell the world it is his by putting his name on it. In a society where literacy is stressed, the ability to write his name gives him a feeling of self-assurance. A child is often able to print his name before he is able to write it cursively, and if he wants to, he should be helped to do so. Generally speaking it is advisable to avoid building bonds which must afterward be broken, but the satisfaction the child receives by scribbling his name, no matter what the form, more than offsets the slight reteaching difficulties which may later be encountered.

No serious attempt should be made to teach writing until the muscles involved are sufficiently developed to perform with reasonable ease and comfort. The length of practice periods should be limited to avoid muscular and nervous fatigue. Standards required should be defined by a child's ability to attain while continuing his interest in wanting to learn to write better.

Keeping in a straight line, or making letters that are uniform in size, are not the main concerns with the beginning writer. He needs to be taught to visualize the forms and shapes of letters, and to be shown the movements required to record them on blackboard or paper. Words chosen should be those that have meaning for the child and that are not too long. Under the observing eye of the child, the teacher may slowly write on the board a word to be copied. Then, synchronizing their strokes, child and teacher write together. Errors should be corrected as they are made. If too many erasures are necessary, the conclusion may be drawn that too many new elements are being introduced. Often some single letter may need practice before it can successfully be included in a word. If, during the process, a child's attention is kept visually centered on letter formations, the hand may occasionally be guided, but the guided hand does not usually bring needed kinesthetic finger movements into play and has, therefore, limited value as a teaching technique.

Writing material should be chosen to suit the stage of writing accomplishment. A blackboard is helpful when a child is beginning to learn to write. It affords him the space he needs, and allows him and his teacher to stand side by side, permitting him clear vision of what the teacher is writing. Quick and frequent erasures are possible. When the paper and pencil stage has arrived, the use of pencils with soft lead, and unglazed paper with lines to guide the heights of letters, is suggested. Pen and ink, if used at all, should be delayed until the child has reached a stage of independent writing. After he is past the blackboard stage of writing, the child should have a desk or table of suitable height so that he can assume a healthful and comfortable writing position. To avoid shadows on the paper, if he is right-handed the light should come from over his left shoulder, if left-handed from over his right. There is no practical reason to stress handwriting standards beyond the point where what has been written can be read with ease.

The teaching of writing is closely related to the teaching of spelling. No longer as in the days of the Hoosier schoolmaster is the one who can spell best automatically accepted as the best educated person in the group, but it is still a valuable asset to be able to spell correctly those words one uses in writing. Certainly the attempt to clutter the mind of a mental retardate with words for which he will have little or no use is a waste of time and effort. It is not "the chief end" of his education.

It may be that to be able to spell and write his name may take care of a young retardate's needs. A young retarded boy always wanted to add a post script to his mother's letter to his grandmother. When she would ask him what she should say for him to grandmother, he would always say, "Hello." So his mother taught him to write the word and sign his name. An occasional special interest word of this sort may serve as a springboard to further needed spelling. Aside from an occasional word taught to fulfill some social need, instruction in spelling should be delayed until the learner has reached a primer stage in reading, and then only in limited manner.

Greater emphasis should be placed on written than on oral spelling. However, there are many retarded children who seemed to be helped in their study of spelling if they say aloud the letters of the words as they write them.

The young retardate cannot be expected to study his words entirely by himself. One study procedure is for the teacher first to ask the child to read the word. The teacher then repeats the word, and slowly and legibly writes it on the blackboard, naming each letter as she writes. Teacher and pupil then repeat the performance coordinately. Further practice is afforded when the child writes the word from copy. After he has correctly copied it two or three times the child is tested to see if he can write it without looking at the word.

Nearly every young speller begins by learning to spell his name. What he learns beyond that point is determined by the imperativeness of his needs, and the amount of interest and effort devoted to the study of it.

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THE MENTALLY RETARDED CHILD AND HIS ARITHMETIC

Favor therefore, the situations which life itself will offer, and the responses which life itself will demand.
One of THORNDIKE'S GOLDEN RULES for teaching arithmetic

Number enters into the lives of most children. Many parents seem to look upon counting as an early life necessity. Many children appear to get a good deal of enjoyment out of counting. A mentally retarded boy with a mental age of four could count to ten. When he was alone he would sit with blocks or an abacus counting one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten, over and over as he put blocks from one pile to another, or pushed the beads of his abacus. But his verbal counting was not coordinated with his handling of the objects. He might pick up two objects counting them as one, or perhaps count a single move as two moves. He could perform the recitation of the numbers perfectly, but number had no real meaning for him. Many mentally retarded children can count at some length in rote manner long before they have any realization that the purpose of counting is to find how many.

There are many opportunities within the home and natural environment of the child which may be used to teach him some of the uses and purposes of number. A mother who noticed that her son was verbally counting in meaningless manner decided to start with the number of people in his immediate family to get across to him the idea that counting has useful purposes. He helped set the table for family meals by counting out the number of plates, pieces of cutlery, etc., needed. Counting while bouncing a ball, counting steps as they are climbed, counting the number of rooms in the house, or the number of blocks to the store—all are ways of giving meaning to numbers.

Initially his learning to count will be dependent upon interest and practice. Beyond a certain point his practice should be limited by its usefulness to him. Counting as a useful tool has its limitations. The use he may have for large ordinal numbers will be slight even after he may have become an integral part of a community. He may want to be able to locate pages in a book, or locate house numbers. These usages should be taught in practical manner which does not necessitate counting. He may learn to recognize that three digit numbers are larger than two digit numbers, etc., and learn to recognize which is the larger of two numbers, each with the same number of digits.

To associate the written or printed symbol of a number with its already known numerical value represents another teaching step. Neither the spoken word "five," nor a group of five objects, is automatically associated in the mind of a retarded child with the written or printed symbol 5. Definite effort is required before the association becomes automatic. A helpful device is the use of posters, each with a number and a corresponding number of pictured objects. The child is furnished with pictureless number cards to be matched to the pictured posters. There should be more than one poster for each number, bearing different pictures, so that the child will not get the idea, for example, that the 3 is always associated with apples, or 5 with boys. Later, numbers may be matched to groups of objects.

The correct way of making numbers should be demonstrated to the child. Attempting to learn how to make them from tracing is usually ineffective. Placing the number before the child to be copied without supervision or guidance, is apt to result in unconventional ways of writing numbers. More than one child has been observed to make an 8 by placing one circle on top of another.

Until correct movements have been learned, teacher and pupil should perform together, with the pupil following the teacher move by move.

It is more important that a young retardate be taught to handle the small amounts of money with which he makes his childish purchases, than to be taught the little he might learn about the mechanics of addition and subtraction. He may learn that a nickel and five pennies have the same value. He may learn that if he buys a four-cent stamp to put on a letter to grandfather, he should get back a penny when he offers a nickel in payment. He may learn that two nickels have the same value as one dime, and that he should get back a nickel when he presents a dime in payment for a nickel purchase. Selling and buying transactions over the counter of a toy store may be used to augment the learning situations the child encounters in real life.

Time enters everywhere into the life of everyone. In the life of the child it is almost time for father to come home, time to get up, time to go to bed, time to go to school, time for lunch; there are many reasons for watching the clock. Apparent to the child as is his need for learning to tell time, his learning to do so is necessarily a gradual and slow process. It is better to first teach the positions of the long and short hands at the even hours. After he is consistently able to tell when it is one o'clock, two o'clock, and so on, he may be taught the use of the long hand to show the number of minutes before or after the hour. A discarded clock with Arabic numerals, and hands that may be turned at will, may be found useful.

It is to be hoped that by the time the retardate has developed to the point of understanding the meaning of, and performing, some of the manipulations required in addition and subtraction, he will not need to depend wholly on parental instruction for his arithmetical learnings. Yet even after the child is a member of some school group, the parent can be of help to him in his understanding of number—not so much in trying to teach him mechanical processes involved, as by helping him to appreciate the usefulness of number. Let him follow his growing weight on the scales. Let him watch the butcher put on the scales the meat mother has purchased. Let him buy a pound of butter, or a five-pound sack of sugar. After the packaged products are home, let him put them on the kitchen scales, and help him to read the indicated weights. Let him measure the half-cup of this or that when mother is baking. Let him bring in the milk, and note the quantity purchased. When father is measuring the room for a new carpet, let him help hold the tape measure, and write down, or watch father write down, the measurements. Let him pay the check at the restaurant, and listen to father recount the change received.

If number is to become an asset to living for the mentally retarded child, it must come more from life than from textbooks. The school must look to the home for help to show the child that arithmetical knowledges learned in the schoolroom are applicable to the child's out of school living.

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THE MENTALLY RETARDED CHILD AND SOCIAL STUDIES

The world without its relationship to human activity is less than a world.
JOHN DEWEY

If the mentally retarded child is to achieve any understanding of the world and his relationship to it, he must first start with his own restricted environment. He must start with the immediate and concretely observable. From there he may be able to travel to farther away and stranger places.

The orientation process begins in the home. After making the infantile adjustments required within the house, his exploratory field is usually enlarged to include his backyard. Then his parent takes him by the hand and they journey to the corner store. Before long he is going to the store alone to buy the needed loaf of bread, or the two or three easily transported articles listed on his mother's note. Grandfather takes him for a walk, and introduces him to the policeman on the corner. He goes on a shopping trip with mother. With her he watches for the bus that is to take them downtown. She calls his attention to the name and number as the right bus comes in sight. She hands him the fare to drop in the slot. She is teaching him how to get about as independently as possible in his widening world.

To understand as much as he can about the immediate environment of his existence will serve the mentally retarded person much better, help him to live more fully, than to have a memory storehouse of informational data about remote times and places. It is not meant to infer that a fence should be built around his small and immediate world, and that he be denied the privilege of peering through its palings. On the contrary, any evidence of an inclination to find out what lies beyond its confines should be recognized and encouraged; but to know his immediate world is essential to his well being, and the better he understands it, the better are his chances to appreciate and understand more about the outer world. The accumulation of a lot of facts, such as the names of all the countries of Europe and their capitals, or the names and dates of the battles fought during the Revolutionary War, might be a possible attainment for some mentally retarded child, but how much more useful for him will be a wealth of knowledges about his own physical environment, about how the people in his community earn their livings, and of how the welfare and safety of its members are protected.

When the mentally retarded child is learning to travel about in his own community, when he is learning its numerous means of transportation, when he is learning the locale of places of interest and usefulness, he is learning geography. His knowledges may extend to include the names of the more important thoroughfares as well as those of his immediate neighborhood. If his family takes auto trips, the older retardate may enjoy tracing traveled routes on the road maps.

Democratic government as an institution will probably never be understood by the mentally retarded person. However, if he has enough intelligence to become a partially active member of society he will, with guidance, be able to form certain civic concepts. He can learn how his neighborhood and his city are kept sanitarily healthful, and what safety precautions are maintained. He cannot learn very much about economic principles, but he can perhaps learn that the people of his community are economically dependent one upon the other.

The purposes of the teaching of social studies to a mentally retarded individual should be to acquaint him with the physical aspects of his immediate community, to build within him an appreciation of the interdependence of people, and to awaken his civic pride at least to the point where he tries to help keep his community a clean, healthful place in which to live, and to the point where he is a law abider to the fullest extent of his ability to understand the laws and their applications to his actions.

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THE MENTALLY RETARDED CHILD AND HIS LEISURE

Whatever we do to occupy our leisure time is a measure of what we like to do. . . . In a very large sense it must be said that what we enjoy is a matter of habit. FREDERICK BONSER

The term leisure is here broadly applied to include moments when the young mentally retarded child may temporarily be left to his own devices without strict parental supervision, as well as to his later years when he may be required to spend some fixed hours in educational or vocational pursuits with time left over for fun. The average toddler may at times during the day be confined to his playpen to keep him out of mischief and away from harm, but the mentally retarded child, with a toddler's mental age, is often too big physically to be so cared for and protected. If at all possible the child's own room should be equipped with toddler toys which invite safe and solitary play. The outdoor area, securely fenced in, and with simple outdoor equipment, is a big help. The child who at an early age learns how to meet his own play needs is growing in self-sufficiency. In later life, it is during his leisure moments that he is most apt to get into trouble. Knowing how to use his leisure time wisely is a wonderful asset for a mentally retarded person. To be sure, his social fulfillment requires that he learn how to work and play with others, but no person is constantly in a gregarious situation. The child who has learned not only how to play with others, but also is able to play safely and happily by himself, is doubly fortified against the perils of idleness.

Attention is called to suggestions made in Chapter 7 for keeping the young mental retardate occupied. Some of them, with perhaps some slight adaptations, will be found useful past the mental age levels under discussion in that chapter. Below are a few additional solitaire games, and others that may be carried on by mother and child without too much interference with household or other duties.

1. **Find the Picture.** The mother mentally chooses a picture from a favorite book and instructs the child to find the picture where the boy is flying a kite, where Bobby and Betty are visiting the farm, etc.

2. **What's Gone.** The mother removes an easily movable piece of furniture from a room, or some favorite toy from the shelf where it is ordinarily kept, or any familiar object from its customary place. The game is for the child to guess what is gone. If necessary, clues may be furnished as, it is brown and white, it is square, it was a Christmas present, etc.

3. **Treasure Hunt.** A cookie, a piece of candy, any small-sized article which is in itself a reward, may be hidden in a spot not too difficult to find. The mother may ask, "What room is it in?" The child may respond, "In my room?" or "In the kitchen?" etc. Another clue question might be, "How high is it?" The child may counter question, "Is it higher than I am?" or "Is it lower than my head?" etc. The complexity of the questions will depend upon the child's ability to comprehend. Since the difficulty of the hiding places, as well as of the questions, may be changed as needed, this is a game of which children, if they are at all able to play it, never seem to tire. Words like corner, east, west, north and south, floor, ceiling, behind, in front of, and so forth may be introduced to expand language usage.

4. **Solitaire Game.** Uniform-sized picture cards which may be shuffled are used. Half of the cards might have pictures of people on them, and the other half animals. The cards are shuffled and placed on the table between the child and a doll, or pet toy animal, or any other acceptable representation of an opposing player. Before turning each card, the child names his choice, "person" or "animal." If his guess has been correct he keeps the card; otherwise it is given

over to the imaginary player. At the end of the game the player with the larger pack of cards wins.

5. **Number Game.** A deck of playing cards with the face cards removed is used. The cards are shuffled and dealt by the child equally between himself and his imaginary opponent. The child turns a card from the top of each deck. The higher card takes the trick. If they are matched in number each player takes one of the two cards. The procedure is repeated until all of the cards have been turned up; the holder of the most cards wins.

6. **Elimination Game.** A number of objects having some like, and some unlike, qualities are placed on a table. A simple combination might be a red ball, a blue ball, a red book, a blue book, a plate and a metal saltshaker. The mother mentally chooses one of the objects. The child through his questioning tries to find out which one. He is not allowed to directly name the object in his questioning asking for example, "Is it a book?" The following illustrates how the questioning might go. "Is it red?" The answer is "No," and the red book and ball are eliminated and put aside. "Is it round?" The answer is "Yes" and the blue book and the saltshaker are eliminated. "Can I break it?" The answer "Yes" furnishes the last needed positive identification of the plate.

7. **Thinking Game.** Either the mother or the child may be the thinker and mentally choose some object well known to the guesser. The first question asked is "Where is it?" The answer is supposed to confine the area in which it may be found as, "It is not outside our own yard," or "It is not outside this room." This is a game that requires a little training, but one that is well liked by somewhat older mentalities. Typical questions are: "Is it round?" "Is it smooth?" "Can I eat it?" "Is it very long?" This is a game that may start using objects readily identifiable from distinctive clues, and grow into a game that calls for considerable use of observatory powers.

8. **Jig-saw Puzzles.** These may start with simple pictures cut on the simplest and fewest possible lines. Duplicate pictures may be used to help indicate how parts should be put together. A puzzle that is not too puzzling, and may be put together within a comparatively

short length of time, may hold the interest of a mentally retarded individual. It is an interest that may carry over into adult years.

There are many simple games of solitaire with playing cards which may be taught to mentally retarded individuals, who will often amuse themselves with them for long periods of time.

Many retarded children enjoy music, providing they are allowed to participate in the making of the musical sounds, or in some manner to respond to them. Observed attempts to train mentally retarded children to become appreciative listeners to music, listening just for the sake of the inner and passive enjoyment of music, have to the author appeared to be quite unsuccessful. If some type of rhythmic response is encouraged—anything from clapping the hands, beating a triangle, ringing a bell, to dancing —music seems to be enjoyed by many retarded children. Since music is a special ability, there may be exceptional cases where a mentally retarded individual may be an inactively attentive listener, but opportunity for active response will give more satisfaction to most of them. Selections with decided rhythmic beats, or with repetitive phrasing in the lyrics are generally favored. A boy that always joined in the singing when it came to the part where the fish "swam and swam and swam" liked to keep him swimming for a much longer time than provided for in the lyrics. A song like "Davy Crockett" may be a favorite because of its topical interest.

If some member of a family is a pianist, patience should permit that at least once in a while, time be shared with a mentally retarded family member who wants to get "in on the act." Starting first with one toy band instrument it is often fairly easy for a child to learn how to chime in at a time indicated by the accompanist, with a twang or two on his triangle, at another time with a prolonged ring of a bell, etc. One child became so adept at this sort of thing that he was a source of entertainment to his family and their friends, and proud of his appellation of "a one-man band." A child's toy phonograph with a few well selected records can be the source of much amusement for him if he is rhythmically inclined. Even without a piano or a phonograph some enjoyment may be had by accompanying the sounds of toy instruments to rhythmically recited rhymes. The following crude little verse demonstrates the idea:

I like to *beat* upon my drum,
To *beat* it o'er and o'er,
I *beat* it once, I *beat* it twice,
I *beat, beat, beat,* some more.

The child is taught to synchronize each beat of his drum to each repetition of the word "beat" in the rhyme. The ingenious parent of a rhythmically inclined child will be able to think of more and better verses to suit the ringing of bells, etc.

Singing may be pleasurable for a mentally retarded person, and if he can learn to sing with a group without noticeable discord it will often serve him well socially. Even the child who at first appears to be a monotone can usually be taught that there is more than one note in the scale, and that he has the vocal equipment to make notes sound as different as they should. It has been stated that no one is an inherent monotone. It is not at all unusual to find a person of borderline or lesser intelligence who possesses a naturally pleasant singing voice and is able to use it well. Music is a universally and socially approved pastime, and any evidence of musical ability in a mentally retarded child is worth encouraging. Even though his audience may not extend beyond intimate family groups, if he has evinced an interest in musical performance, and if he can be trained to the point of tolerant acceptance, he should have the opportunity to develop whatever measure of talent he may possess. Of course, no mentally retarded child should be held to long distasteful hours of practice to develop a degree of talent which would go unnoticed in the average child; but whatever talent comes naturally and readily should be developed.

Some retardates get a good deal of pleasure from the use of drawing and painting materials. Most of them possess no high degree of creativeness, but if the use of the materials furnishes the retardate with any measure of satisfaction, their use is worthwhile. It is more important that his creation has meaning for him than that it have meaning for its possible viewers. The author has known a few retardates with considerable ability to reproduce pictures created by more talented individuals. Such an individual has what is, for him, a valuable talent. There are many types of handiwork which frequently have value for the retardate. Whether it be weaving, basket making, leather tooling, woodworking, sewing, embroidering, or some current handwork fad, makes little difference as long as the retardate enjoys doing it.

Hobbies of one sort or another are valuable leisure time assets. Whether the hobby be making or growing something, collecting something, developing some talent, developing some physical prowess, participating in some type of sports, or whatever, is of little importance as long as it holds the interests and efforts of the participator. The part of the parent is to bring activities of possible interest to the child's notice, to help acquire needed equipment, and to see that he has the opportunity to learn whatever skills may be required.

Many retarded children like to collect things. A suggestion or two from his parent may help a child get from the heterogeneous stage, where he merely accumulates things, to the stage where he begins to collect things of certain classes. A child may just cut out and save more and more pictures as long as they are brightly colored and appealing to his eye. If a parent gives a child a small scrap book and tells him that as soon as he has found all the pictures of animals that he can, he may paste them in the book, a step toward classification will have been made.

A boy in a special class who had picked up a number of leaves and brought them to school was encouraged by his teacher to start a collection. When the class visited a park he found a number of leaves he had not known before. With help as needed he identified them and was taught how to preserve them. Classification did not extend beyond finding out the name of the tree from which each leaf came. Had it been insisted that botanical terms and classifications be applied, his leaf collection hobby might have been nipped in the bud. As it was, it extended over a number of years. Relatives from California sent him some leaves from trees that did not grow in his local area. His teacher sent him leaves from Mexico when she visited that country during her vacation. After he graduated from the special class he returned at different times to display his collection for the class.

A retarded girl collected dolls dressed to represent the girls and women of different countries. Her mother helped her in her research and the girl made some reasonably authentic costumes. She took great pride in showing and explaining her collection to visitors in the home.

The great outdoors is in itself an invitation to the wise use of leisure. Hiking, fishing, camping, learning how to have a good time and take care of oneself while out in the open, picnicking, swimming in summer, skating in winter, and gardening are all possibilities which should not be overlooked. Outdoor games of the tag, catch-me, and racing varieties, as well as competitive games like pitching horse shoes, shuffleboard, and croquet, add to the number of possibilities.

The mentally retarded child does not reach an age when he can effectively participate in some group activity as quickly as does the child of normal intelligence. He may see a group of ball players and want to get hold of the ball and throw it, he may want to be noticed by other members of the playing group, but he has no idea of what it takes to be an efficient member of a ball team. He is still thinking in terms of self while other children of the same chronological age have begun to think in terms of teamwork. The mentally retarded child who is plunged directly from the lonely and infantile play activities of his own backyard to the near teen-age activities of the neighborhood play lot, finds himself confused and discontented. He has either missed something in his play training along the way, or it may be that he needs to grow toward a more adequate play age. The first signs of wanting to play with others should be watched for, and when they appear, if it is at all possible, a group should be found where others too are learning how to play. It should be a situation where he can play comfortably with others without unduly disturbing their comfort. The mentally retarded child who has learned how to play with others has made a giant step in social adjustment.

As he grows older, if the mentally retarded child has found those with whom he can have wholesome fun, his chances of getting into trouble have been, for the duration of his associations, reduced to a minimum. Playing with others starts at home with family members. It is there that he should begin to observe such simple rules as taking one's turn, playing according to the rules of the game, etc. The place where he can be expected to make his best play and social adjustments is with a homogeneous group of similarly handicapped children. Although on the whole a child's mental age can be expected to fairly well indicate his play interests, his physical and motor ability ages must also be considered. Even though his mental age would place him at a nursery school level, if he is physically equipped to compete he would probably prefer playing tag with boys a little nearer his own chronological age. If he can run well and catch—even though he may not always use the best judgment about what move to make next—if no better player is available and if he is able to take razzing as well as the next fellow, a spot on the team will probably be found for him.

It is within a play group of his peers that a mental retardate is most apt to find opportunities for making good play adjustments. The pressure is not so great. His peers find no reason to be irritated by his slow responses, because they too need a little longer time to learn the rules of a game, and they too react with slackened pace. If there is no group of his peers to be found, some other group into which he can in some measure be socially integrated should be sought.

Many trainable retardates make fairly good play adjustments in play or nursery schools, even though these schools may not be organized with retardates primarily in mind. A young mental retardate's larger physical size in such a group need not necessarily be a detriment to adjustment. As time passes and other children approach primary school age, there may be childish comments about the retardate's size. When, as a result, the retardate begins to display signs of self-consciousness, then the group has lost its major social value for its retarded member. If, however, while still a member of some toddler or kindergarten age group, the retardate has picked up some play habits which will in some measure ease his entrance into some slightly older play group, his presence then has served a real purpose.

The play group which includes the retardate may be some neighborhood group to which he has been introduced by brother or sister, or next-door playmate. When associations are not naturally formed, the parent may need to take a hand. Inviting into the home a small group of children, a group chosen because it has been noted their play activities agree with those of the retardate's play potentialities, and seeing to it that all present have fun together, is one possible approach to the formation of a more permanent play group. If the retardate knows how to play some certain game, or to perform some feat, introduce these into the party plans. Invite a young guest to teach to the group some game he knows how to play. Let the retardate fulfill the role of host insofar as he is able. A wedge may be inserted that will ease the young retardate's acceptance as a more permanent member of the group.

If a retardate is so lacking in adaptability that he can't seem to fit in with any of the regular community play groups, the search should be widened for other children with like play disabilities. Even though they come from such distant neighborhoods that transportation will need to be provided, they may be brought together at regular intervals, sometimes in one home, sometimes in another. Mothers may take turns in planning and supervising play activities.

The parent who looks forward to the time when his mentally retarded child will be happily absorbed into the community should acquaint himself with the resources available there to give his child leisure time training. Many communities have supervised playground and recreational facilities of various sorts. Some years ago a young man who taught industrial arts and physical education in a special class center was employed during the summer months by the park board of his city as a playground supervisor. He induced a number of the children from his school to join the playground group. His placements for these children were based on what he thought would be their chances for acceptance by other members of the groups, and where he thought they would have the best opportunities to develop socially. A child unable to be accepted as the member of some sports activity group was instructed in some type of handwork, and entered into folk game groups where the competition was not too keen. He organized a band of youngsters who showed interest in sports, yet who could not be expected to successfully participate in them, into a fan club. He taught them a number of energetic yells, and they became the rooters who followed their favorite teams from place to place, and substituted lung exercise for physical exercise.

A parent who believes his child might fit into some type of recreational activity should consult the playground or recreational director of his community, if such there be, and find out whether there is anything included in the program that might answer his child's recreational needs. Nothing will be gained by over-rating a child's abilities, but on the other hand, the parent may be able to point out possibilities that will help a supervisor to find a useful activity for his child. Once the interest of a supervisor has been aroused, he stands in an excellent position to mold the attitudes of playmates with whom the child may come in contact.

Other suggested organizations where a mentally retarded person of educable degree may find help in learning how to spend his leisure are the Boy Scouts, the Girl Scouts, the 4-H clubs, The YMCA and YWCA, and church youth groups. He cannot expect to find help unless he is capable of entering into some of the activities available. How much help he may find in any one group will depend upon the activities carried on within the group, upon the attitudes of both the leaders and the members of it toward the child and his handicap, and certainly upon the abilities and adaptabilities of the individual seeking entrance.

Physical activities generally employ more of a mentally retarded person's leisure time than do mental activities. Not many mentally retarded people use reading to pass their leisure hours. A mentally retarded person may look at the tabloids and at his favorite comic strip, but reading for pleasure cannot be relied upon to take care of the major part of his leisure time. It is not intended to wholly rule out reading as a pastime for the mentally retarded. An individual of borderline, or near borderline, intelligence may do quite a little reading, and if he is interested, he should certainly be taught how to use the library to find suitable books to read. Unfortunately, most of the magazines and cheap books written in language understandable to a mentally retarded person put emphasis on the sordid, the unhealthfully emotional, the sensational. Too many books written at the retardate's level of reading comprehension play up crime and violence. Even though eventually the "rat" gets killed, reading such stories adds nothing to his knowledge of justice and the proper methods of dealing with injustice. The same act that is unlawful for the villian may be legal for the hero. The mentally retarded reader seldom reaches the point where he can separate the action from the doer. The mentally retarded individual who finds his reading satisfactions chiefly in the materials which glorify the sensational will be better off if his activities can be directed toward some other equally satisfying activity.

A mentally retarded person may enjoy looking at television for at least short periods of time, but if his interests are analyzed it will probably be found that it is not the psychological drama that holds his attention, but the programs where there is plenty of physical activity taking place, like riding, fighting, chasing, or shooting. Just to be one of a group of applauders watching some sport event on the screen seems to satisfy some. Left to his own choices the mentally retarded child will usually find some preferences among the children's programs. Circus performances seem to be favorites. While the same general rules of censorship as apply to programs viewed by all children apply to those viewed by a mentally retarded child, it should be remembered that he is even more of a mime than is the average child. Unless programs come within a parentally censored tabu group, certainly some of the television time should be reserved for a mentally retarded child to view his favorite programs.

A part of the education of any mentally retarded child who has any social possibilities whatsoever, is to teach him how to use his leisure time. Right use of leisure time not only adds to his own immediate happiness but helps to protect him against the likelihood of delinquency. If his parents have shown him how to find leisurely enjoyments within his home, and have helped him to make contacts with church and community recreational and/or parentally sponsored groups, since he is a creature of habit, it is more than likely that he will continue to seek companionship and pleasure in the same places and with the same people.

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THE MENTALLY RETARDED CHILD AND HIS PERSONALITY

Good manners are made of petty sacrifices.
RALPH WALDO EMERSON

Manners easily and rapidly mature into morals.
HORACE MANN

There are about as many definitions of personality as there are definers. The average person thinks of personality as a group of personal qualities that he regards either favorably or unfavorably. The mentally retarded person who acquires a set of approved personality characteristics has an asset that offsets to considerable degree his lack of intellectual abilities. If he can impress others with his amiability, his acceptance as a member of any group is more likely. Ovid, born before Christ, recognized the forcefulness of the quality when he said, "That you may be loved, be amiable."

While there are some mentally retarded children who exhibit personality traits that seem to be linked to their deficiencies—for example, the mongolian child is characteristically, although not invariably, affectionate and happy—and while sometimes a "brain-damaged" child is seen who seems unable to establish relationship with the world about him, there is no set of personality traits that *per se* may be regarded as symptomatic of mental deficiency. Mental retardates are subject to the same personality variations that individuals in general are, and their personalities are for the most part shaped by the same influences that shape those of all children. Mentally retarded children are as different from one another as are children on the whole. The reason why a child reacts favorably or unfavorably to a situation is basically the same whether he be of normal or less than normal intelligence. He feels afraid or unafraid; he feels adequate or inadequate; he feels loved or unloved—in short, he feels secure, or insecure. The more persistent these feelings, the greater is the influence exerted upon his personality. The child with a predominant sense of security is a predominantly happy one. In his insecurity a child may react in a way opposed to his best personality interest; in his security he reacts in a manner that nurtures his personality growth.

It is true that a child's mental retardation may influence his personality because he fails to see the reasons for things, because he misinterprets things that are said or happen to him, and so he reacts differently than he would if he fully understood. The mentally retarded child meets many situations which demand a maturity of reaction of which he is incapable. For example, he may find himself the unwelcome member of some play group, unwelcome because his retardation makes him a hindrance rather than a help to carrying out play plans. Taunted or teased by his playmates, or those he would desire as his playmates, he may go off by himself and nurse his inner wounds, or he may run home to his mother for consolation, or he may put up the best fight of which he is capable, or react in any of a number of possible ways. The less frequently he finds himself with groups or situations demanding more than he has to give, the better. A mentally retarded child should not have all obstacles removed from his path, but when the stumbling block is his inherent inability to cope with a situation, the less frequently he encounters it the better.

A misconception that warrants correction is that a moron is a person possessing an overabundance of disagreeable, perhaps even bestial, personality traits. A most fallacious, but all to prevalent, idea is that he is inherently vicious. To the mind of the psychologist the word moron has no such connotation. It merely defines a person with an IQ somewhere between 50 and 70.

Because of the false meanings attached to it, it is a word that generally is better left unused. The only reason for mentioning it here is to dispel any fear related to the term which may possibly be lurking in the mind of some parent. There are thousands upon thousands of morons carrying on in our society in a relatively independent and useful manner. It is the unstable moron, whose instability often arises in an unstable home, who may be the possessor of the type of personality often ascribed them by the public. The parent should regard the term as a hopeful sign that even though his child is retarded, he does possess many trainable and educable potentialities.

A mentally retarded person can never attain that full emotional maturity regarded as ideal for the adult. In truth, it is a rare attainment for anyone. The retardate does not have the degree of imagination necessary to see himself less as self, and more as a brother with fraternal obligations and inclinations. It takes a good deal of imagination to become wholly unselfish. It takes a good deal of maturity to give more than lip service to loving one's neighbor as oneself. It takes maturity of imagination to be able to so completely enter into the life of another that one person actually feels what the other feels. Most of us can feel quite sorry for another, sorry enough to want to do something to alleviate his suffering, but even that is not complete maturity. We certainly cannot expect the mentally retarded person to attain more than most of us attain. If he can be given frequent opportunity, in his small way, to show consideration for others and help those in distress or trouble, he may, more nearly than the average person, attain his optimum of personality maturity.

The mentally retarded child should learn to be a giver as well as a taker, not just alone in terms of material things, but in terms of himself. The small attentive service he renders for another, the giving up of some small pleasure of his own so that the pleasure of someone else may be increased, the small going without that someone else may have, are the petty "sacrifices" that make "good manners" mature into "morals." It should not be forgotten that what to the adult mind may be a petty sacrifice may to the childish mind represent a major denial. Abstract ideas of selfishness and unselfishness may take a long time in forming. It is only after repeated performances of specific unselfish acts, and having the fact called to his attention that he has performed unselfishly, that the slow learner eventually arrives at any abstract concept of the meaning of selfishness or its antithesis.

Edward Johnstone, who for many years headed the school at Vineland, took as the motto for his work with retarded children, "Happiness first, all else follows." In a large measure, the happiness of the mentally retarded child depends upon the recognition given him by others. He needs praise and plenty of it. If he lived in a world that moved at the speed he moves, a world designed to extract from him only in proportion to his ability to give, he would need proportionately less praise. But, unless he is of such low intelligence that he is spared all competition, the world he lives in is constantly comparing him with those whose mental equipment permits them to accomplish things he is unable to accomplish, and yet he often has sufficient understanding to realize that others are doing better than he is doing. If something can be found that he can do, and with someone that he likes, and if his doing well is noted and praised, his chances to happily build up good personality habits are greatly increased. If he can be happy with what he is doing, he will not be as anxious to attempt that which he would better leave untried and undone.

It is impossible always to control situations so that they bring forth desirable behavior. Discipline is not a word applicable only to children of normal intelligence. If a mentally retarded child does something taboo he should not of course receive satisfaction for its doing. If dissatisfaction is experienced he will be less apt to repeat the performance. As with all children, punishment is effective only if the child understands for what he is being punished. If one time he finds an experience disagreeable, and the next time pleasurable, if one time his parents frown and punish him for something he does, but the next time someone either laughs or lets the act go unnoticed, it may become a habit, if it brings him enough pleasure, and the correction of it, if ever accomplished, will be a long and difficult process. The more positively personality habits are formed, the better.

It is much better, and usually easier, to teach by rewarding for good behavior rather than by punishing for bad. There is no child who at times does not need correction, but corrective discipline should not be the predominating influence in molding a child's personality. Rewards for good behavior may sometimes be something material, sometimes the granting of permission to do something, but praise for good behavior should be used with the greatest frequency. Mentally retarded children thrive on praise to a remarkable degree, and the desire to please others is so strong that many times emphatic verbal disapproval is an adequate corrective measure.

Long before the word psychology was coined, percept was recognized as a vital teaching force. The mentally retarded child is even more dependent upon it than is the child of normal ability. The imitative abilities of mentally retarded children have often provoked comment. All children in the early stages of their learning make use of imitation, but the mentally retarded child, as he grows older, continues to employ it to more than the average degree. Probably because reasoning power is a less potent influence in his habit formation, the mentally retarded individual tends to copy the actions of those with whom he associates, or whom he admires.

A young mentally retarded boy, with certain physical earmarks which accentuated his differences, frequently went walking with his grandfather. Seeing the courteous old gentleman tip his hat and politely greet friends and acquaintances, the boy began to tip his hat, and use the greeting words of his grandsire whenever he met any older person he knew. The mother was greatly pleased when she overheard an acquaintance refer to her son as "that gentlemanly little boy." It was the child's politeness, not his physical anomalies, that stood out in the mind of the observer. Some ill manner on the part of the grandfather would have been as readily copied, with less commendable results. Remembering that percept often serves where understanding fails, it behooves the parent to consciously and conscientiously set the stage so that the mentally retarded child sees things done, hears things said, that the parent would like to have his child do and say.

We are all more or less creatures of habit, but volition enters more into the formation and correction of habits in the case of the person of high intelligence, than in the case of the person of low intelligence. It takes a retarded person longer to form a habit, and much longer to reform one. The person of higher intelligence has a better chance to foresee what the continuation or discarding of a habit may mean to him. If the mentally retarded person can be given a reward that is more than ordinarily satisfying to him, a reward that can be immediately reaped, it may furnish sufficient incentive to get him to change his way.

An example of this is the case of a mentally retarded girl of ten, who had been called an obscene name by a group of boys when she had tried to wedge her way into their play activities. She had no idea of the meaning of the word, but it did represent something undesirable. An aunt who was temporarily caring for the child in the absence of the mother applied some mild disciplinary action, and the girl used the same epithet. The aunt, in the presence of the child, suggested to the mother that she should be punished for what she had said. The child, finding herself the center of attention, again spoke the socially taboo word. In fact, she used it more than once. The aunt told the girl about plans for a trip to the zoo. It was explained to her that the trip would be undertaken only if she was sure she could get along without "naughty talk." The girl promised to try to remember not to use the word, and the understanding was that if she did use it again they would immediately return home. The girl and the aunt, of whom the child was very fond, completed the trip without unfortunate incident. Had the child been promised that, if she refrained from use of the word, she would be rewarded with a trip sometime next week, or had previous experience taught her that she would not be denied her fun even though she forgot her promise, the outcome might not have proved so successful.

There may be those who will object to the means employed to nip a bad habit in the bud. Theoretically, we would like to have our children do right because they want to do right, and not because they expect some reward other than virtue itself, but practically, we are limited to the highest motive possible that will at the time bring the desired results. Politeness is a big factor in helping the retarded person get along in the world, and even if the politeness is based on no higher motive than that it makes the person more liked by more people it is worth cultivating. Courtesy wins many friends for the mentally retarded individual, and the feeling of friendship adds in large measure to his stability. To be sure, the desire of the mentally retarded person to please the wrong people may get him in trouble, but assuming that safeguards are set up against the likelihood of this happening, it is a risk that must be taken.

The development of desirable personality traits and habits in a mentally retarded child should begin early in his life. His personality development at any given age is dependent upon his development to that date. He will tend to remain longer at the various stages of development, but his reactions will follow the same general patterns as characterize the behavior of the average child, and will respond to the same rules of conditioning. He may have a temper tantrum because he doesn't get what he wants. Given the thing he wants he will before long learn that temper tantrums pay off. On the premise that the thing for which he is crying is not something essential to his welfare, if he is left to cry it out he will after a time discard temper tantrums as a means of getting what he wants. The mentally retarded child may be quick to see that his tactics won't get him the particular thing that he wants, but he will not be as ready to see that temper tantrums are equally ineffective in other situations as well. He may need much training before he can reach that generalization.

We know that high intelligence and emotional maturity do not always go hand in hand. However, a goodly degree of intelligence is required if one is to understand the psychological reasons that motivate his actions. While a high IQ is no guarantee of emotional stability, it is a necessary prerequisite to the understanding of why we do what we do. The mentally retarded person has only habit upon which to rely. Of course he can be taught to habitually look upon certain things as good, and other things as evil. The mentally retarded person will ordinarily react over and over in the same way unless some new element is introduced into a situation that makes a new way of reacting immediately and overwhelmingly satisfying.

No more than anyone else is a mentally retarded child born with a good or bad disposition *per se*. We are all born with certain emotional equipment which permits us to react in different ways to situations met. We may laugh or we may cry; we may or may not get angry; we may cringe or we may fight; we may face a situation or run away from it. We are equipped to react in various ways. Environment plays a large part in conditioning us to react more habitually in one manner than another to situations in particular, and situations in general. We tend to form emotional habits. Nature and nurture go hand in hand in the formation of habits. The personalities of retarded children may be molded into acceptable forms if the potter is skillful, patient, and kind, and if there are not too many detrimental environmental forces at hand to destroy the work of the molder.

Mental retardation is seldom the deciding factor in the development of a child's personality. If he is habitually confronted with situations competitively unfavorable to him he will build up feelings of inferiority and insecurity, but wise guidance can steer him away from damaging situations, and substitute opportunities for success may be provided. Success, especially if accompanied by praise, builds confidence and strengthens his sense of security. Emotional stability is largely dependent upon the formation of the right set of habits. Results are more certain when training is started early. It is far easier to build from the start than to rebuild or replace habits. The emotionally stable mentally retarded child is reasonably apt to remain stable during adulthood.

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THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF HOME, SCHOOL, AND COMMUNITY TOWARD THE MENTALLY RETARDED

> *The school, the home, the community sharing with each other in behalf of the child and sharing the child in their behalf.*
>
> MARTHA VAN RENNSSELAER

Preparing and helping the retarded individual to live what is for him the "good life" is the joint responsibility of home, school, and community. The initial responsibility lies within the home, and partially or wholly remains there until the individual has found an established place in the community, or his condition has necessitated segregation. The home retains some measure of responsibility for the lifetime of even a well adjusted mental retardate. He should be able to look to his home for guidance in all matters too difficult for him to solve. The parent may often profit from shared consultation with some person or organization, and parental infirmity or family circumstance may sometimes necessitate that supervisory responsibilities be turned over to someone else.

Before a child can be expected to make adequate school and community adjustments, he must have learned to make reasonable home adjustments. Initially he will be the one to whom and for whom adjustments are made, but gradually he should be taught to assume his share of responsibility as a member of a family group. Unless the child is of such low mentality that the assumption of any degree of responsible behavior is impossible, it is the charge of the home to build within the child a readiness to accept and profit from whatever opportunities the school and community have to offer to further his maturity.

The home, or some proper substitute situation provided through the home, has the responsibility for the physical care and health maintenance of the mentally retarded child. As far as he is able to do so, the child should be taught to care for his own physical and health needs. It is in the home that the child must learn to walk and talk. The home has the responsibility for the child's all-important early language learnings. The child who enters school fortified with a workable vocabulary, who can express his needs, and who can understand what is being said to him, has a very decided learning advantage over the child to whom common word meanings must be taught after entrance to school.

It is the responsibility of the parent, or parent substitute, to provide the mentally retarded child with experiences which acquaint him with his environment. The going forth together of parent and child to observe the wonders of nature, to become acquainted with the policeman on the corner, the groceryman, the minister of the parish—helping the child to get his environmental bearings—is a responsibility that starts in the home. Good orientation is an asset in making school and community adjustments.

It is the responsibility of the home to provide opportunities for constructive play, and to provide contacts with recreational outlets in terms of the child's needs and interests. If he has any constructive ability at all, he should have materials for making and constructing things, and teaching assistance to acquire needed skills. Whether the media used is wood, cloth, cooking ingredients, or any other manipulatable material, makes little difference as long as the child is able to mold or make them into articles of satisfaction to himself, assuming of course he does the thing as skillfully as he can. His interest at times will need stimulating, but constant watch should be kept for any attempt to do something in a new and different way. The spark of creativeness is infrequently kindled in the retarded child, and the smallest one should be fanned and kept alive.

The gravest responsibility of the home is to inculcate within its mentally retarded member a body of socially acceptable habits and attitudes. His acceptance as a member of society will depend more upon his measure of self-discipline than upon any body of skills and informations he may acquire, important as some of them are. The home can provide the mentally retarded child with no better guarantee of a future happy existence than the development of a set of good behavior patterns.

Whatever religious training a child has stems first from the home. The author knows of no attempts that have been made to study the religious concepts of the mentally retarded. We all know that there are many highly intelligent individuals who find it difficult to form satisfying religious philosophies on the basis of formal creeds and church doctrines. Of course, a mentally retarded person will be little inclined to debate about religious truths, and will accept, even though he does not fully comprehend, the religious faith of his instructors. When it is said that he accepts a religion as his own, it is meant that he can tell to what church he belongs, can say the words he is taught to say, and can perform the ceremonial rites required, but it would be difficult to know how much of what he says and does has meaning for him, or how often meanings that are imputed coincide with those his elders intend for him to acquire. However, the willing performance of religious observances can certainly not deter a child's development, and who is wise enough to say what inner responses may be called forth.

The child who sits beside his parent during a church service without undue restlessness may derive satisfactions and develop worthwhile attitudes, even though he cannot understand a word of the spoken sermon. The overly restless mentally retarded church-goer detracts from the comfort of those about him, and can scarcely be expected to benefit religiously or otherwise from the experience. Even though the child may find certain services irksome to him, there may be others within the church which he finds more acceptable, and therefore probably more beneficial to him. Sunday school is the best answer for many mentally retarded church goers. What formal instruction should be attempted, and what ritualistic performances shall be required of a retarded child in order to promote religious growth, will of necessity be determined by parental convictions.

There are certain concepts of Christianity which are not beyond the comprehension of the average mental retardate, providing they are taught in a comprehensible manner. The idea that Christ walked this earth many, many years ago, and that His way of living provided for mankind an example of how it should try to live is not an overly difficult concept. The parent who believes that a knowledge of the Bible is essential to Christian living will find many Bible stories which can be simplified and told in understandable language.

The parent who is not too concerned about his child's formal religious training, yet who believes that he should have faith in the existence of a Supreme Being, can point out to his child the beauties and wonders of nature, and teach him that God is the Creator of all natural phenomena. Such a concept is well within the understanding of many mentally retarded. A young mentally retarded boy presenting a bouquet of flowers to his teacher expressed his love for her in a simple, faithlike statement, "God made these for you." Sunsets, flowers, oceans, mountains, and all living creatures, are concrete evidences of the existence of a higher than human power, and the mentally retarded learn concretely. According to the Bible our faith should be a childlike faith. Perhaps the mentally retarded child, in his simplicity of thinking and his readiness to accept, may be the possessor of an unquestioning and enviable faith.

The church or synagogue can often be relied upon to give a mentally retarded child his first step toward community living. If and when he derives satisfaction from attendance at some service in a house of worship, at least a part of it probably comes merely from doing what other people are doing. He is a member of a congregation. He does what other members of the congregation are doing, and goes through certain rituals with them, as one of them. Certainly within the organized religious group we may expect the mentally retarded individual to encounter evidences of kindly and sympathetic understanding. Certainly somewhere within the extra-mural activities of these institutions may be found some spot where the trainable or educable retardate can find some measure of social adjustment.

Aside from the responsibilities accompanying direct home associations with his retarded child, the parent has the additional one of acquainting himself with opportunities afforded by school and community for the furtherance of his child's growth. If a parent finds his community lacking in opportunities for training and life adjustments for his mentally retarded offspring, he may feel compelled to instigate corrective measures. There is strength in numbers, and once a parent begins to look for other parents with problems analogous to his own, he will usually not have much difficulty in finding them. The parent who is working to extend community opportunities for his mentally retarded child, will ordinarily find the strength of his pleas multiplied by as many times as he finds parents to join him in his requests. Someone has stated that every normally populated city block will turn up at least one mentally retarded inhabitant. Even in more sparsely settled areas the distances between families with retarded children is not too far to prevent cooperative efforts. The parent who seeks aid for his child should first acquaint himself with organizations and agencies which are, or normally might be expected to be, interested in the problems of the mentally retarded. He should find out what has been done, and what it is planned to do to advance their interests. He may find that he wants to place his strength and efforts behind already planned projects.

A parent should not ask from a community more than it can reasonably be expected to provide. Moreover, he cannot expect much cooperation and interest from a community in which he himself has shown little interest. If, although he has children in school, he has never been an active member of the P.T.A., or if he has never been a member of any civic group or organization, or if he has never given of his time or money to further the welfare of others in the community, if the school program as a whole has been a matter of small concern to him, how can he expect wholehearted response to his request for help with his lone mentally retarded child? How can he ask that a special class be organized at public expense so that his mentally retarded daughter may receive the schooling she needs, or ask for help in finding suitable employment for his mentally retarded son of employable age?

It is within his immediate neighborhood that a mentally retarded child gets his first taste of community life. When family members accept the child for what he is, and do not try to mask evident truths about his mentality with pretensions, false claims, and rationalizations in their conversations with neighbors, the chance to shift attention to a child's potentialities is increased, rather than decreased. To be sure, the parent does not shout from the housetops, "See, my child is mentally retarded." But, the denial of an apparent condition hinders rather than helps kindly, neighborly understanding of the child. The parent who acknowledges that he is aware that his child lags behind in mental development, is then in a better position by his own exemplary attitudes of patience and understanding, to solicit the sympathetic understanding of those outside the immediate family circle. A word of appreciation to some neighbor whose parental influence has awakened within his, the neighbor's, child a sympathetic attitude toward a young mentally retarded near-dweller, compelling him to refrain from taunting remarks and acts of unkindliness and humiliation, may sow the seed for the better understanding on the part of other children. It is not only the mentally retarded who respond to words of approval and appreciation.

Even when the mentally retarded child is the accused aggressor in some altercation with a neighborhood child, the parent will have the advantage if he takes matters into his own hands, and approaches the parent of the offended one in an apologetic manner for what his child has done, and with an attitude of expectancy of understanding that the disagreement grew out of his child's lesser abilities to fully understand the situation. He can ask for forgiveness, and give assurance that every effort will be made to prevent a repetition of the episode. He can ask that the parent try to help the offended one to understand that what was done, was done because the offender is not as fully grown up as he appears to be, and that he acted as a much younger child might have acted. Such an approach will often do much to melt away grievances, and to insert a wedge that may widen community understanding of the problems involved, and a community desire to assist in making life more livable for the child, rather than to resist his presence in community groups.

Home and school have cooperative duties toward the handicapped child. The home has the responsibility of preparing the child for school entrance, and if school facilities are available for him in terms of his needs, to enter him in school. The home has the responsibility of abetting the efforts of the school in every reasonable manner. It should augment the teachings of the school by continuing as the child's teacher in his out of school hours, not primarily academically, but rather in terms of the child's social and emotional development.

The parent has the responsibility of knowing not only what is included in the school program that directly concerns his child, but also how it provides for children in general. He should know in what respects the school is standard or above standard, and in what respects it is substandard.

It is the responsibility of the school to provide educational opportunity for all children of any worthwhile degree of educability. The better equipped schools have diagnostic means for evaluating the intellectual capacities of their pupils. The aim of the school is to provide curricular adjustments for differing needs. Theoretically, the curriculum should be fitted to the child, rather than the child to the curriculum. Educators would be the first to admit that there are wide gaps between ideals and practice in this respect. Every administrator knows that the school belongs to community, and that progress depends not alone upon his educational theories, but also upon the moral and financial support accorded the school.

Every school administrator finds himself constantly compelled to select items to be included in his school budget on the basis of relative merit. Most educators believe that both mentally retarded children and the school as a whole benefit when these pupils are segregated in special groups, but when choice must be made between spending money for special classes and other school needs, not all administrators weigh values alike. The number of school communities throughout the country which provide specialized training for retarded children is increasing, but the fact remains that the larger proportion of those who could profit from it still remain in regular classrooms, or are left untaught. The new impetus that is being given to the organization of special classes is coming as much from without as from within the schools themselves. Yesterday a parent often expressed reluctance to have his child placed in a special class, today intelligent parents are wisely demanding their organization.

Where a special class has been organized it becomes the responsibility of the school to select a teacher who can understandingly teach retarded children. She should not be put there just because no other satisfactory placement may be provided for her. Sometimes a teacher who has established tenure, but who is becoming increasingly incapable of handling large groups of children, is placed in charge of a special class on the assumption that it will be easier for her to handle a small group. Unless she has special qualifications which will make her adaptable and useful to the group, this is an unjustified move. Any teacher whose educational philosophy is too obsolete to be acceptable in other school situations will certainly not be able to understand the educational needs of the mentally retarded. She is more than likely to be an individual who lacks adaptability in her thinking and practice, and adaptability is a prime prerequisite for a teacher of the mentally retarded. If a teacher's thinking has been concerned primarily with subject matter rather than with the child, it will probably continue to be, and with less and less success.

The teacher of some years experience may become a successful teacher of the mentally retarded, providing she has already proven her ability to recognize and adapt herself to children's needs. It is essential that a teacher of the mentally retarded understand the learning capacities of her individual pupils, that she be able to evaluate things taught in terms of her pupils' present and future needs, and that she be able to teach patiently and in accordance with the laws governing interest and effort.

She should be a person able to cooperate with, and profit from, the advice of specialists who may be able to furnish her with information about her individual pupils. She should be a student as well as a teacher, a seeker after knowledges of how to better understand and serve the needs of the children under her care. Of course, given otherwise necessary qualifications, the teacher with special training is much to be preferred.

From the standpoint of the mentally retarded, the ideal community would be one where every member was free from prejudice toward the retardate, which afforded adequate educational opportunities for the handicapped, which furnished employment for all desiring and deserving employment, and which provided ample social opportunities for them. To fulfill his role as a member of society as entirely as is possible the mentally retarded individual must be trained, and he cannot be adequately trained unless he is first identified. Identification should be for the purpose of controlling his environment to the advantage of his growth, and not for the purpose of excluding him from his fit place in society. The potentialities of the mentally retarded need to be constantly kept before the public eye. The parent, the school, the social welfare organization, the private organization interested in the welfare of the mentally retarded, each has its share in educating the public concerning its responsibilities toward the mentally retarded.

The community should provide adequate diagnostic means for locating its mental retardates. It should provide adequate educational facilities, including vocational training when needed. It should prepare for and furnish employment to the potentially employable retardate. It should socially accept him to the fullest extent of his social adaptability, and provide special recreational opportunities for those of lesser adaptability. It has the responsibility of accepting the mentally retarded person as a member of the community, of helping him to understand his responsibilities to the community, and of permitting him, in as far as he is safely able to accept them, all the privileges of the community.

There are differences of opinion among intelligent people concerning state, and particularly federal, aid for educational purposes—aids which may directly or indirectly affect local programs of education for the mentally handicapped. A parent's belief regarding the state's responsibilities for the training of his mentally retarded child will be influenced by his political philosophy. Some states provide subsidies to aid local school units in their organization of special classes for the mentally retarded. In some states the local unit is reimbursed for each special class attendant in an amount that represents the difference between the per capita cost of educating the average elementary school attendant, and the average cost of educating a special class attendant. Some state departments of public instruction have divisions of special education which aid in the organization and supervision of local special classes, and set up standards of pupil entrance and teacher qualifications. Most states have state schools for the mentally deficient in which the cost of care and training is wholly or partially paid for with state funds. Some states have guidance and supervisory programs to aid the mentally retarded make satisfactory community adjustments. Recently certain federal funds have been allotted for programs of study and research in the field of mental retardation.

The waiting lists of most state schools are long. Public school classes for retarded children are regrettably few in comparison to the number needed. Frequently the rules of admission exclude from special classes many retardates trainable in at least some measure. Schools and communities have a long way to go before it can be said that they are adequately meeting the needs of the mentally retarded. But the mentally retarded child with or without the help of school or community continues to grow, at least physically. Failures of school and community double parental responsibility. The parent must not fail his child. He must to the best of his ability fill the gaps left unclosed by outside help, and join hands with any person or groups who can help him to awaken public consciousness of the needs of his child and others like him.

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THE MENTALLY RETARDED CHILD AND HIS FUTURE

> *Now, when they had gone over the stile, they began to contrive among themselves what they should do at the stile to prevent those that should come after them from falling into the hands of Giant Dispair.*
>
> Said of Christian and his followers in BUNYAN's Pilgrim's Progress

No individual's future can be predicted with certainty, but there are many foreseeable possibilities which may be utilized in plans for the tomorrow of a mentally retarded child. The parent knows that after his child has attained full adulthood in a chronological and physical sense, the time will never come when he will be able to accept the responsibilities of adulthood in all its aspects. How fully he attains the degree of maturity of which he is inherently capable will depend upon the habits and attitudes that have been instilled within him, upon the practical knowledges he has acquired, upon the environmental opportunities available to him as an adult, and upon the guidance accorded him from time to time. How fully he may practice the privileges we ordinarily associate with adulthood will depend upon afforded opportunities, and upon his ability to understand and accept the responsibilities that are the natural accompaniments of these privileges. The good of society as well as personal desire deserves consideration in the granting of freedom of choice in his actions.

A lesser percentage of the mentally retarded will always need a considerable amount of custodial care and personal supervision. Some will never become even partially integrated into society. Our goal for such an individual should be assurance of adequate physical care, provisions for his comfort and happiness, and the acquisition of all the social amenities of which he is capable that will ease his acceptability as a member of household and family. To make his future as bright as possible in terms of his degree of intelligence he should be provided with simple occupations, recreational and useful, that deliver him from the state of do-nothingness. It is recognized that there are some few mental retardates whose future holds for them no escape from a state of infantilism. In such a case, in addition to provision for his physical well-being and comfort, there will be a moderate, but lifetime, need for attention-getting devices on an infantile level. The devices may possess more recreational than training value, but any response to sight, sound, or touch should be utilized if it has the slightest developmental worth. If the only value derived is the satisfaction the child gets from being noticed it is probably worthwhile. Knowing as little as we do about the emotional life of the lower grade mentally retarded individual, our sense of duty compels us to assume that his sense of security depends upon attention received. We may also assume that, as with all infants, overattention and the encouragement of whims may be expected to develop the less desirable personality traits of babyhood, which add to the comfort of neither parent nor child.

The parent of a retarded child who will probably outlive his parent has this question always before him: What will become of my child when I am gone? Where the wealth of the family permits the securing of the future financial needs of the retarded one, it is suggested that qualified legal counsel be sought regarding ways to insure and protect his future financial interests.

It may not always be expected that brothers and sisters, or other relatives, will have the same sense of responsibility toward him as do his parents. If the relative has an established household of his own, if he is a parent with a growing family, he may not welcome the constant presence of the handicapped relative within his family circle. The fear of disruption of family unity, the fear that a mentally unhealthful atmosphere may be created within the home, the fear of interference with social life, or some other reason may forbid the wholehearted acceptance of the handicapped relative as a household member. To be forced into a situation where, even though an honest effort is made to be kind, his presence is more or less resented, is not a happy outlook for the retardate.

Looking to the future, beginning before the retarded individual has reached adulthood, and continuing for as long as there is need, the holding of occasional family conferences to consider ways and means of caring for the one unable to assume full care for himself is a very wise procedure. Of course, the one under discussion should not be included in these meetings, nor should he be aware that he has been a topic of discussion. All others who have any interest in his welfare, and are old enough to understand the purpose of the conference, should be included. If membership in such a family roundtable does no more than to crystallize a sense of responsibility toward the object of consideration it may be considered worthwhile. More questions may be asked than are answered, but knowledge about possible solutions of problems involved will be increased. One member may come up with a practical idea that has entirely escaped the notice of others.

The questions that may arise are numerous. When and if the time comes that the handicapped family member no longer has a parental home, where may he find a spot to call home? What does the state have to offer for his suitable adult care? Is there a possibility of finding some family or person who would give him kindly care if they were reimbursed? If finances need to be considered is there a possibility that costs involved might be prorated among family members without undue individual sacrifice? Is one member of the family in a better position than another to accept him as a member of the household? Would other members then be willing to assume or share in the cost of his maintenance? What family member is best suited, because of his personality, or close friendship, to act as the confidant and moral counselor of the less fortunate family member? The future of the mentally retarded person after demise or infirmity has removed the parent as his natural guardian, is a matter that should be as frankly and unemotionally discussed as the intelligent understanding of family members permits. To be sure, as time goes on, what at one time appeared to be a possible solution to a problem involved may be nullified by circumstance, but that is no excuse for the omission of family planning, nor for leaving the future of the retarded person wholly to chance.

The majority of mental retardates are inherently capable of becoming at least partially self-supporting, but by no means all that could be are wage earners. There are, however, thousands of mentally retarded persons holding down jobs so well that their mentality is never questioned. There are numerous reasons why, although they possess enough intelligence, many mental retardates are not employed at gainful occupations. There are some whose care and upkeep are provided for by their parents. Unless his days are otherwise filled with satisfying occupations, the adult retardate, even though he has no economic need to earn his own living, may want to do so. Some parents, financially well able to care for their fully grown sons or daughters, may be reluctant to permit them to become wage earners because the employment available is menial in nature. Family pride enters the picture. The sense of well-being that often comes to a person from earning money, from release from complete financial dependence, is not to be ignored.

The mentally retarded daughter of a well-to-do manufacturer was permitted by her parents to accept a job as a stock girl. The genuine pride the girl enjoyed from the receipt of her weekly paycheck more than offset any parental false sense of pride. Moreover, she developed a friendship with another girl employee, a girl of estimated dull normal intelligence, who became her boon companion. Even though their backgrounds were neither economically nor intellectually alike, the two families carried on a friendly relationship based on their mutual desire to maintain a wholesome social environment for their daughters. Any mentally retarded person who can find, or can be helped to find, respectable employment, and who derives satisfaction from and performs his duties in an acceptable manner, is entitled to the feeling of self-respect that comes with the knowledge that he is a wage earner.

Many female retardates find themselves most suitably occupied with household duties within their parental homes. The average home does not provide as many satisfying duties for the male retardate as it does for the female. If there is a large yard to be taken care of, and gardens to be made, or if he lives on a farm, more natural occupations may be found than if he lives in a city apartment. To work outside the home seems for many to represent the manly thing to do. Whenever the home is the place where the mentally retarded young man or woman is expected to find his or her only occupational outlets, the tasks should be more than trivial chores which might as easily be done by one of lesser age and ability. His measure of responsibility should be as full as possible, to make him feel as adult as possible.

The obstacle which prevents a mentally retarded person from finding suitable employment may be lack of training. The mentally retarded person who has had training in specific skills stands a good chance, other things being equal, of finding employment. Tool handling and woodworking knowledges, or household skills have frequently proven to be definite job getting aids. In some schools pupils are trained to meet the particular skill requirements of the industries of a given locale, helping them to readily find and retain employment.

There are many unskilled or semi-skilled jobs, more or less routine, or at least so simple to learn that no specific pre-training is needed, that may be learned directly on the job. If whoever acts as his instructor will take a little extra time for the teaching, or will rely more on demonstration than on verbal direction, the retardate after learning will often prove to be a useful and dependable worker, and one who if treated with ordinary kindness will be contented to remain on the job for as long as he is needed.

When the mentally retarded worker fails on a job it may be for one or more of many reasons. It may be that the job is too difficult for him, either because he is incapable of learning the necessary skills, or because he has not received the training or instruction necessary to qualify him. It may be that someone is heckling him or instilling ideas of discontent in his mind. It may be that he has not learned habits of industry, a failure that may be traced to home or school. He may never have learned to be persistent, or how to cooperate. He may lack amiability, which is a great asset both to a job getter and a job keeper.

The work efficiency of a mental deficient may depend to a large degree upon the amount of understanding shown him by his employer. Providing he knows how to do so diplomatically, the parent or vocational worker may give useful hints that will aid adjustments. The parent will often be in a better position to influence the small businessman who may be considering his son's or daughter's employment. Upon the organized group will depend the general education that will influence labor and industry as a whole about methods of making useful employees out of those who learn slowly.

One influence that may prove a hindrance to the employment of the mentally retarded is that there is more and more being done mechanically, and less and less manually. The "hired man" on the farm is no longer as valuable as he once was just because of his strong back and plodding ways. There seems to be less need for the "hewer of wood and the drawer of water." May it not be that we have too many people of high intelligence working at jobs that could be done as well by those of lesser intelligence? We are constantly being told that more high school graduates should be entering the field of science; we know there is a lamentable dearth of qualified teachers, doctors, and other professional workers; and certainly some of the better brain power should be devoted to working out some of the existing social problems. Perhaps what we need is incentives to induce the more intelligent to develop some of their latent potentialities, and to give to society in fuller measure in terms of those potentialities, and allow those of lesser gifts to do some of the things now being done by those capable of attacking intellectually more difficult tasks.

The degree to which a retardate's earnings afford him economic independence depends not alone upon the amount of his earnings, but also upon his manner of spending them. A wage earned by one may have more ample maintenance value than the same wage earned by another. Standards of living may be influenced by parental standards, or may be raised or lowered by those of fellow workers or associates. The worker's qualifications and his opportunities to locate suitable work both have their effect upon earning capacity. The single person can make his dollars go farther than can the married one; and the married man without children farther than the one with children.

The mentally retarded individual cannot be expected to manage his income on any long-range basis. Left entirely to his own resources he will ordinarily not be able to plan except in a payday to payday manner. Susceptible as he is to suggestion he may be persuaded to put aside some stated amount each payday as savings or payment on insurance, but he will also as easily be induced by some persuasive salesman to buy this or that regardless of its usefulness to him. Once he has paid in some specified amount enough times, the payments become habitual, and he may continue to pay even though he ignores more important monetary obligations. Mentally retarded persons have been known to continue payments on articles even after they were fully paid for. The habit of consulting a trusted counselor before making costly or unusual purchases, or before signing any papers, is a habit worth trying to inculcate.

Should the mentally retarded person be permitted the same freedom of propagation as is accorded persons of normal intelligence? There are many reasons why procreation by the mentally retarded is undesirable, but how best to prevent it is a debatable question. It is self-evident that whenever there is strong likelihood that all or most of the children of a defective individual will also be defective, it is best for all that he have no children. Even ignoring the inheritance factor, certainly no one can expect any mentally retarded person wholly and adequately to fulfill the role of parenthood. Theoretically at least, parents of today are expected to have some knowledge of child psychology, and to weigh parent-child relationships in terms of their effect upon a child's future. To expect a mentally retarded parent to furnish the type of guidance that supplies assurance that his child will be adequately provided for during his childhood, or that he will help his child to grow to the fullest adulthood possible for him, is asking too much. Planning for the future of a child is a parental obligation, and the mentally retarded person is not a planner.

The purpose of the following paragraph is only to present for parental review some of the proposed methods of preventing procreation and some of the ways of evaluating their effectiveness and merit. The most certain means of preventing parenthood is sterilization. A parent may find this idea in conflict with his religious or ethical beliefs. Some propose that sterilization in order to be ethical should be voluntary, that the consent of the individual concerned should always be obtained before such an operation is performed. A mentally retarded person is usually so open to suggestion that his consent has little meaning. On the other hand, if decisions are to be based on results obtained on psychological examinations, what IQ shall be accepted as the demarcation point below which all shall be sterilized? Individuals of extremely low mentality offer no problems of procreation. Shall an IQ be indicated below which all retarded individuals shall be left undisturbed? If factors other than those of subnormality shall be considered, what are they? Shall the individual be sterilized because of anticipated social behavior, or must such action be predicated on the committing of some disapproved social act? Shall sterilization be required of a mental retardate before he can receive a license to marry? These are but some of the questions that arise in the minds of those interested in the subject of sterilization for the mentally retarded.

The ones most likely to become parents are those who are sufficiently intelligent to find some place in society. There are many such people who have never authoritatively been identified as mentally retarded. Of the identified, few are enrolled in any type of central registry. Some states have laws on their statutes regarding the sterilization of the mentally retarded, but there are few states where the laws are systematically applied.

Practically, sterilization has to date provided no widespread answer to the prevention of procreation by mental retardates. Ethically many parents will find in it no answer to their individual problems. There will be no attempt here to discuss types and methods of sterilization and their relative effectiveness. Where advice concerning it is desired, it should be sought through a qualified medical source. The parent with decided moral compunctions against sterilization will discard the idea. For those who do not find the idea objectionable, it is a matter which should be conscientiously and carefully studied in the light of the individual case, and the circumstances involved.

Is marriage advisable for a mental retardate? Again we find ourselves in the area of debate. There are laws on the statute books of a number of states which forbid the marriage of the mentally deficient, but where, as is usual, the methods of identification are feeble and undefined, there is inadequate control. Sterilization as a prerequisite to the issuance of a marriage license to a mentally retarded person has been proposed by some. Here also the matter becomes administratively, and to the mind of some morally, involved.

Society has an interest in the marriage of mentally retarded individuals if for no other reason than because it tends to increase its social welfare expenditures. The mentally retarded household head is less able to earn enough to keep a wife and family without added financial assistance. The mentally retarded wife is less apt to be a good enough manager to stretch incomes to cover all necessities. There are many mentally retarded women who have been trained in household arts and who take great pride in their habits of household cleanliness and culinary ability. Some are much better budget stretchers than others. One of the most persuasive arguments offered against interfering with marriage for the mentally retarded is that there are many of them getting along without the help of welfare agencies, and without becoming involved in distressing social situations growing out of marriage. However, it must generally be agreed that mental retardation is a liability rather than an asset for successful marriage, and particularly for parenthood.

The parent of a mentally retarded youth to whom the thought of marriage might sometime occur should study facts known and theories propounded about marriage and parenthood for the mentally retarded. What application of knowledges available may be made in any particular case, what influences may be brought to bear, what practices will be utilized—all should be decided in the light of the circumstances, and should be made by parent or guardian in accordance with his beliefs about what is best and right.

What are the chances that the mentally retarded child of today may become the delinquent of tomorrow? Who can prophecy with any degree of accuracy concerning any child's future moral behavior? Other things being equal, the mentally retarded child who has built up a set of good moral habits during his childhood will continue to employ those habits during his adult years. The mental retardate's lack of comprehension makes it all too difficult to teach him a basic moral philosophy to use in weighing values of conduct, but on the other hand, he can usually be depended upon to follow established habits of conduct with less questioning than may his more intelligent brother. He is less apt to want to experiment with life to "find out what it is all about." When the mentally retarded person changes his course of conduct, it is usually because he has been tempted by something that will immediately give him a good deal of pleasure, and usually it is something that has been persuasively offered. The satisfaction may not necessarily come as much from the performance itself, or the offered rewards, as it does from pleasure received from the praise of some person or persons who suggested it. Many of the socially disapproved acts of the mentally retarded are done on a "follow the leader" basis. He does what he does because it makes him the recipient of satisfying attention as the result of doing what he has been told to do. The greater his opportunities for pleasurable social activities in places where he is least apt to meet those who would seek to corrupt his morals, the greater his chance for performing in a socially approved manner.

It is when the unusual enters the life of the mentally retarded person that he finds himself uncertain how to act. If he is called upon to adjust to a new condition, if something he has taken for granted as an always present factor is no longer there, if his formed habits and ways of doing are inapplicable to the situation at hand, it is then that he may stumble. Being unable to look forward and figure out what will happen if he does thus or so, his decision will be influenced by the immediate and more apparent results. If given a choice of reactions, he may choose the one that has in it some immediate and seemingly attractive reward, or he may do the thing that seems easiest at the moment, or he may find some elements sufficiently familiar to induce him to carry on in a more or less habitual manner even though other elements involved would, to the more mature mind, indicate the folly of the move.

Youthful contacts with church groups and organizations, community youth groups, supervised recreational centers, or other places where healthful types of activities may be participated in, may help to train the mentally retarded individual so that in later life he is inclined to seek like associates in similar places. How the mentally retarded individual has learned to use his leisure, and what leisure opportunities he has as an adult, have much to do with his stability. More thought should be given to the establishment of recreational groups for the mentally retarded taking into account homogeneity of recreational interests.

The adult mentally retarded person should be permitted to act as independently as is reasonably safe for himself and society, but he should not be entirely cut off from some measure of guidance. As much responsibility for his guidance as is possible should be assumed by those having personal interest in him, but there will always remain the necessity for community and state agencies to act as advisors to parents or guardians of the mentally retarded, or if need be, to the individual himself. Their knowledge of available resources may be assumed to be much wider than that of the average parent. Those concerned with employment problems may well avail themselves of the assistance afforded by agencies concerned with employment placement. Where guidance at a home level is inadequate, guidance from an agency with wider knowledge and resources should be sought.

The important habit of seeking counsel is one whose formation should not be delayed until adulthood has been reached. If during his more formative years the mental retardate has acquired the habit of talking over his problems—problems perhaps of minor importance to the mature mind, but of genuine significance to the mind of lesser maturity—with parent, brother, pastor, or some trustworthy friend, he can usually be depended upon to continue that habit throughout his lifetime, or as long as he has a friendly counselor to whom he may turn. Parents should look forward to the time when their personal guidance will no longer be available and give thought to guidance replacement. A possible substitute-to-be may be present during counseling periods, and add his occasional word of advice, becoming identified in the mind of the retardate as one to whom he can turn for help. Of course a mentally retarded person would not be inclined even under these circumstances to accept someone as his advisor whom he did not personally like.

The mentally retarded person cannot be expected to anticipate his future. He finds little fulfillment in dreaming about the years to come. He lives in the present. In the interest of his child, it is the parent who must project his thinking in terms of his child's possible adult attainments, training him in the present for the realizations of the future, opening up as many avenues for fullness of living as he can for his child, making as many provisions as he can to insure his child's future security, and teaching the child how and where to seek help when his problems become too complicated to solve alone.

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THE INDIVIDUAL MENTALLY RETARDED CHILD

Read not to contradict and confute, nor to believe and take for granted, nor to find talk and discourse, but to weigh and consider. FRANCIS BACON

Mental retardation is a relative term. To say that a person is mentally retarded tells that he is below average in intelligence, but it does not tell how low; it indicates differences, but it does not indicate the degree of the differences. The person with an IQ of 75 has intellectual possibilities so far superior to the one with an IQ of 30 that while the latter will for his lifetime be sheltered and treated more or less as an infant by his parents and the world at large, the former, as soon as he has attained physiological and chronological maturity, will probably have many of the responsibilities of manhood thrust upon him even though they bend him low. As the parent has read the foregoing pages, it is to be hoped that he has read critically, detecting the inapplicabilities as well as the applicabilities to his particular child. However, there are certain truths about the mentally retarded child, and his parent's relationship to him, that are so generally applicable and important that they merit re-emphasis:

Every parent of every child should note possible signs of retardation and seek explanation of their meaning if they are singularly significant, or if they are aggregately numerous.

Every parent of every child who has been authoritatively identified as mentally retarded should accept the fact of his retardation as unemotionally and understandingly as possible, without resentment or self-incrimination.

Every parent of a mentally retarded child should enquire into the cause of the retardation to find out if some special treatment is needed, but he should not become so overly concerned about causes that he neglects to provide the training necessary for his child's mental growth and development.

Every parent of a mentally retarded child should have as complete knowledge as possible of his child's age levels mentally, emotionally and educationally.

Every parent of a mentally retarded child should, with some degree of discernment, be able to compare his child's progress with his natural rate of growth.

Every parent of a mentally retarded child should have some knowledge of how to adjust teaching procedures to fit his child's abilities and needs.

Every parent of a mentally retarded child should be more concerned with teaching his child those things which answer present and future needs, than with the amassing of a mental stockpile of informational data.

Every parent of a mentally retarded chlid should, in his teachings, start with the child and his relationship to his environment, with things that already have meaning for him, rather than with remote and faraway things which must be forced upon his attention.

Every parent of a mentally retarded child should see that he is taught those things which make it easier for him to get along with his environment and the people in it, and make it easier for those about him to get along with him.

Every parent of a mentally retarded child should plan for his future, taking into account his intellectual and social expectancies, and the degree of independence he may ultimately attain.

Every parent of a mentally retarded child should lend whatever support he can to the furtherance of study and research in the field of mental retardation.

Every parent of a mentally retarded child should not only have a special interest in mentally retarded children and their parents, but also a general interest in the welfare of all children. He should have as much interest in the gifted as in the retarded if for no other reason than because it is to the gifted we must look for the solution of the problems of mental retardation.

From time to time the parent needs to appraise, and reappraise, his mentally retarded child to find out if he is growing and developing at a rate commensurate with his abilities. He needs to appraise, and reappraise, the environment within which the child lives. Neither the child himself nor his environment remains the same. He is a changing child in a changing world. As an appraiser, the parent needs to ask and re-ask many questions, as: What is my child's present intellectual and social status? What are his probable ultimate limitations? Are there any sensory or physical defects that need correction or to be educationally taken into account? If so, are they modifiable conditions? Are there certain elements within his environment that seem to have especially good effect upon the child? Is the most being made of these in his training? Are there elements in his environment that appear to be hindering his developmental progress? If so, what efforts are being made to eliminate these influences? Who are the people in his life? What are his relationships toward them? What are theirs towards him? What play interests does he have? What play companions? Do they adequately fulfill his play needs? To what hobby interests has he been exposed? Have some been found that satisfy his needs? How does he spend his leisure time? Has he acquired skills and knowledges commensurate with his abilities? Have any special abilities been uncovered that might be worth training? Are his emotional and social habits what his mental maturity indicates they should be? How independently is he able to perform? Is he permitted to do as many things alone as he is prudently able to do? Is he as thoughtful and helpful as he might be?

Memory cannot be relied upon to record the data necessary to judge progress. Records kept need not be complicated in nature, but the jotting down of memoranda at regular intervals, and the preservation of samples of work from time to time, can be of valuable assistance in evaluating the advancement of a mentally retarded child.

"Relatively speaking" is a phrase that should be frequently applied to the selection of things to be taught to any particular child, and to the adjustments that should be made in his environment. The older he grows the wider the selection of things he can be taught. Time will not permit the teaching of all of them. Which are the most important in the life of the particular child under consideration? The child and the parent will not always weigh values alike. The child measures the importance by the imminency of his satisfactions. When a child shows indifference or distaste towards some genuinely important learning, some new way must be found to awaken his interest, some way which brings immediate satisfaction to him.

The parent who is interested in checking the progress of his child will want to know how much growth may normally be expected from year to year. The following table is offered as a general guide that may be roughly applied to indicate the amount of mental growth that may be yearly expected as forecast by the IQ:

Intelligence Quotient	*Approximate yearly growth in months*
30	3.6
35	4.2
40	4.8
45	5.4
50	6.0
55	6.6
60	7.2
65	7.8
70	8.4
75	9.0

As has been stated this guide can be but roughly applied, and will have no real value in cases where for some reason the IQ cannot be expected to remain reasonably constant, as for instance where degenerative factors are at work to lower the IQ. To illustrate its use: Generally speaking a child with an IQ of

50, having gained about six months mentally for every year he has lived, should by the time he is six years old be walking and running and doing some climbing. He should be using sentences even though they are short and sometimes grammatically incorrect. He should be performing somewhat like the average three-year-old. By the time he has reached twelve years of age he should be performing as intelligently as the child who has just entered, or is just about to enter, the first grade. The child with an IQ of 75 should be picking up about nine months of mental growth each year. What the well trained child with an IQ of 50 is doing when he is six years old, the one with an IQ of 75 should be doing by the time he is four, and he should be as capable as the average beginning first grader by the time he is about eight. That is, if he has more or less consistently gained about nine months mentally each year he will, by the time he is eight years old, have a mental age of about six years.

Used with discretion, and assuming the parent has some knowledge of how children on the average perform at different age levels, the table may be useful in the appraisal of a child's accomplishments. At least it may help to pinpoint some of the unduly infantile reactions of a child. A case in point, where its use might have helped avert parental mistakes, is that of a young mentally retarded boy who was twelve years old chronologically and about half that age mentally. His mother spent several hours each day trying to teach him. She had a large collection of post cards showing places of interest all over the world. By twelve he had reached the point where when shown a number of them he could glibly identify them, as, the pyramids of Egypt (which, incidentally, he called "Gypsy"), Big Ben, The Statue of Liberty, etc. Yet he had never in his life traveled a block away from home alone. He was not permitted beyond the bounds of his own yard without a guardian. He had been taught to count to 500, but he had never had the experience of buying a nickel's worth of candy, offering the storekeeper a dime, and getting back a nickel in change. He still ate with a spoon, and had never taken a bath by himself.

It is doubtful that his pretty post cards had any geographical meaning for this child. His parrot-like identifications may have given his parents the opportunity to prove to friends and relatives that their child was not the absolute non-learner they may have suspected him to be, and the boy probably derived a good deal of satisfaction from their laudatory comments, but praise for performances of more practical worth would have accomplished the same purpose. If the time spent in learning knowledges of no vital worth to him had been spent in learning how to take care of himself, and how to make his environment useful to him, and how to make himself useful to others, the boy's life might have been far fuller and more nearly like that of the average six-year-old.

The mentally retarded child in most of the areas of his mental development will more closely follow the average expectancy of his mental age than of his chronological age. The following is an expectancy table designed to be of assistance to the parent who is questioning just how mature his child may eventually grow to be. Again assuming the constancy of the IQ, and accepting the estimate that mental growth ceases at somewhere around sixteen, the following table is offered:

Intelligence Quotient	*Approximate mental age at maturity*
	Immeasurable infantilism
Below 30	Infantilism to 5
30 to 39	4½ to 6½
40 to 49	6 to 8½
50 to 59	8 to 10
60 to 69	9½ to 11½
70 to 75	11 to 12 or 13

This is offered as an expectancy table and as such offers no guarantee of its pinpoint accuracy. Except in the case of an unusually vacillating IQ, it can be depended on to have more predictive value than unaided parental guesswork.

While in a general way the parent will want to compare his mentally retarded child's development with what is ordinarily expected of a child of like mental age, he should never forget that he is dealing with an individual, nor fail to respect his child's individuality. To be sure, it is desirable that in most general respects a person "act his age," and for the mentally retarded individual that means his mental age; but it is equally true that he should be treated as a particular individual, with particular traits. The traits peculiar to a person are the ones that make him stand out as a personality. As long as he is not abridging the rights of others, or behaving in a less mature manner than his capabilities would permit, or in a manner injurious to himself or others, if the mentally retarded person prefers to do something in a certain way, he should be permitted that way. If the mentally retarded person prefers certain people to certain others, unless they are retarding his social maturity and security, he should be permitted his choice of companions. He should be permitted to do what he wants to do as long as it is not deterring his growth and development, and is not interferring with the welfare of others. The parent of a mentally retarded child should rejoice when the child exhibits his individuality by acting initiatively with whatever degree of wisdom he is capable.

A lasting truth, that was implanted some years ago in the mind of the author by a biology instructor, is that humans are born with more possibilities than will ever develop, and which ones develop and to what extent depends upon environment. The best talents of a mentally retarded child may lie in his undeveloped inherent possibilities. The curiosity of an average child may lead him into ventures which expose his talents. The mentally retarded child is less intellectually curious, but if he has a sufficiently curious parent who is willing to do a little experimenting with him, talents and interests may be discovered which if developed may add greatly to the child's distinctiveness of character. Just because he is mentally retarded is no reason why he should be molded to fit some typical pattern. The trainable mentally retarded child may need help to discover himself, but there is often more there than meets the glance, possibilities which if nurtured may add greatly to his maturity.

The eventual maturity of a mentally retarded individual depends to a large extent upon the maturity of his parents. A good sign of maturity in a parent is his reluctance to interfere with, and desire to perpetuate, the development of maturity in his offspring. Dr. Harry Overstreet has said, "To mature is to bring one's powers to realization. To waste those powers, or to try to force individuals to exhibit powers they do not possess, is to defeat the maturing impulse of life." If a parent of a mentally retarded child will accept these words as his philosophical guide to the nurturing of his child's potentialities, he may hope for his progeny the highest attainment of maturity sanctioned by nature.

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APPENDIX

Listed below are organizations interested in problems of mental retardation.

The National Association for Mental Health
10 Columbus Circle
New York 19, New York

An organization interested in all phases of mental health. There are 500 state and local associations which offer services of various sorts.

American Association on Mental Deficiency
Box 96
Willimantic, Conn.

A pioneer organization interested in study and research in the field of mental deficiency. It publishes a quarterly professional journal. It also publishes a list of private schools for the mentally retarded in the United States.

International Council for Exceptional Children
1201 - 16th Street, N. W.
Washington 6, D. C.

An organization devoted to the education and welfare of all types of exceptional children including the physically handicapped and the gifted as well as the mentally retarded and emotionally disturbed.

National Association for Retarded Children
99 University Place
New York 3, New York

An organization instigated by parents and friends of the mentally retarded. The membership includes a large percentage of parents. It publishes a quarterly newspaper, supplies literature, and furnishes a reading list. The organization stands ready to offer advice and help to individuals and groups concerned with problems of mental retardation. Much of its work is carried on by committees scattered throughout the United States.

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